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The Tu-Tze's Tower

by

Louise Betts Edwards

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THE GIFT OF HIS SISTER
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"'I will not do this,' he panted. 'It is not manly.'"

(*Page* 237.)

THE TU-TZE'S TOWER

A NOVEL

by LOUISE BETTS EDWARDS
Author of "A [illegible]," etc

HENRY T. COATES & CO.
PHILADELPHIA [illegible]

0

THE TU-TZE'S TOWER

A NOVEL

By LOUISE BETTS EDWARDS

Author of "A Friend of Cara's," etc.

"She stepped upon Sicilian grass—
Demeter's daughter, fresh and fair,
A child of light, a radiant lass,
And gamesome as the morning air.
The daffodils were fair to see—
They nodded lightly on the lea—
Persephone,—Persephone!"

—JEAN INGELOW.

HENRY T. COATES & CO.
PHILADELPHIA 1903

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THE TU-TZE'S TOWER.

PROLOGUE.

IN SIGHT OF THE SUN BRIDGE.

Farewell! Since nevermore for thee
  The sun comes up our earthly skies,
Less bright henceforth shall sunshine be
  To some fond hearts and saddened eyes.

There are who for thy last long sleep
  Shall sleep as sweetly nevermore,
Shall weep because thou canst not weep,
  And grieve that all thy griefs are o'er.

—*Hervey.*

LOT stumbled half blindly, with the swaying, springless step of complete weariness, to the doorway—beautifully carved and curved, but fast decaying—and sat down suddenly on the threshold, holding his head between his hands. In his eyes was a relentless sun, dazzling them with the early orange splendor which visits the crowns of the mountains before valley-dwellers have fairly seen the black of the night crack into a few faint lines of buff. And there was more besides this in his eyes, as there was more running in his heavy head than the echo, swinging about dizzily as in a spiral, of a monotonous chant to weird bronze music, which came nearer, then farther, advancing and break-

ing, then retreating, with the maddening regularity of waves on a straight strip of sand. Lot rose, frowning.

"Noisy dogs!" he murmured, in a tongue which the noise-makers would not have understood. Clumping across the courtyard awkwardly, but, on account of his soft Chinese shoes, soundlessly, he rapidly descended the crumbling steps of the temple, walking straight into a lovely bed of delicate running fern at their foot. Without caring how he crushed this, or knocked the petals off gigantic roses and azaleas like Hindu miracle flowers, whose bushes blocked his way, he strode toward a small black tent, pitched a stone's throw from the building. All about his feet, pillowing their heads indifferently on stones or on tufts of soft fragrant fern, lay sleeping gaunt yellow men, most of them half naked to the piercing mountain air. Only one, who lay across the flapping doorway of the tent, partly roused on his approach.

"No frightee, Matang!" said Lot, in the "pidgin" speech of intercourse between foreigner and coolie. "It allee right." As the native settled back into instant slumber, Lot called through the opening, in the third language he had employed within the past five minutes, "Madame!"

There was no answer. Raising to his lips a small whistle, he blew a note whose sharpness he tried to muffle with his fingers, and almost upon the second a tall woman of about thirty, bronzed like a man, dashed to the doorway, the thin, supple fingers of one hand outspread over her beating heart.

"Have I overslept?" she panted. "Or is he—oh, Lot, cannot you speak quickly?"

The servant shook his head.

"No change," he said, stolidly. "But madame told me to call her at four."

"You were right," said his mistress, still panting, as she hurried with him back toward the temple, her strong, graceful stride somewhat impeded by the Chinese woman's dress she wore, with its troublesome flapping trousers. Over all, she had worn, to sleep in, a man's fur coat, which she stripped from her shoulders as she almost ran. But something in Lot's expression as he respectfully took it from her made her all at once stand still, a great fear springing on her like a wild beast, with its fierce sudden leap, its awful breath.

"Lot!" she cried. "Have you lied to me? is it later than four? is he worse? Oh, I know he is dead, while you let me lie here helpless!"

While she poured out the words, her glance shot past him quite simply to the precipice beyond—a sheer, shining wall of limestone, below which a far, dull-green river writhed like a snake. They had been living for months, years, where indulgence of the three or four great elemental human passions constituted life, and she thought he had betrayed her.

Again Lot stolidly shook his head.

"I told madame there was no change," he said. "How could I deceive her? He is sleeping, but surely living. I only woke madame because I dared not disobey her."

"And you must yourself be sick for sleep," said Winifred, with quick compunction. "Go back to the tent and take some rest. I will prepare his breakfast myself."

Lot rarely spoke without the head-shake.

"I cannot sleep," he answered, unemotionally. "Madame feels so much, it takes her strength, and she needs to close her eyes after so many nights. I only feel as a servant can, and I must be there when he calls. In the night I gave him some *dzo*-milk which the priests brought, together with some tea too vile even for them. They suggested"—he did not look at her, but his side glance toward the fringed precipice was somewhat furtive—"that it might be well to take him outdoors into the air and the sun."

"If he would be more comfortable, yes," replied Winifred, hurrying up the steps of the temple as the sound of coughing reached her ears. Every minute the sun was rising more gay and golden and heartless over their heads.

A tall, spare man was half sitting up on a nondescript couch of straw heaped over with drapery, wrapped in a fur robe like hers, and holding to his mouth a cloth stained with the fatal scarlet spots. The eyes, deep-sunk in his thin dark face, had the translucence which with consumptives precedes the glaze of death. That the woman who entered was the light of them was evident.

She came and put her arms about him with the shy impulsiveness which survives marriage when the lover-relation is perpetuated, yet with the almost breathless gentleness with which we handle priceless fragility. There was burning love in her kiss, dumb heart-break in her eyes, but her tone was resolutely tranquil and matter-of-fact.

"Have I not slept shamelessly?" she asked. "I

wish you could say you were sleeping too, and did not miss me."

"I slept some," he answered; "and had some horrible milk, for which I feel really better."

She kissed him again for saying it. Neither was embarrassed by the presence of Lot, whose own expression of uneasiness was caused by the moving red speck he watched from the doorway, with his back turned to his master and mistress. The speck became nearer and larger, advancing through the neatly-tilled strip of garden on the right to the temple steps, where it slipped a bare yellow arm from under the blood-colored cloak and beckoned urgently. Lot reluctantly advanced to meet it, muttering under his breath.

"It is a fine day, Omito Fo!" began the red garment's wearer, civilly.

"Omito Fo," repeated the Calvinist Lot—non-committally, as he thought.

"But the foreign man must not die in the temple," added the lama, gently.

"We will pay you—" commenced Lot.

The other shook his head. They were peaceful, meditative men, this handful of humble, shaven devotees of a faithless faith, hidden away in a half-forgotten, half-ruined temple well-nigh on the confines of remote Lololand. The almost aching silence of their mountains was only broken by the swirling noise of the unconsciously important Chin Ho, hurrying to the point, nearly three thousand miles distant, where under the name of the Yang-tze it would gather the craft of innumerable nations to its bosom in one of the great deltas of the world. Occasional travelers from Ping

Shan passed by, and stayed over night, but without teaching them the terrible taunt of "Yang-kweitze!" (alien devil) which has signaled to so many massacres in great cities. They took the rare foreigner calmly, almost resignedly, as a source of income for the impoverished monastery and temple. Living, he was no great matter; but dying! not all the incense-clouds, bronze bells, and incantations in China could purify the profaned locality, mere vestibule of the hallowed edifice though it be. So the head lama courteously expatiated to Lot in quite an enlightened way on the advantages of fresh air in illness, and even offered the services of the medical expert of the monastery, a Tibetan charm doctor.

"When you came here," he finally reminded the European, "it was but for a night, or we might not have consented. You said you would push on to Ping Shan."

"But he was not able," said Lot. Something like a sob escaped him, and he abruptly wheeled about, without a backward glance for the priest, sought out his master and mistress, and made various stumbling, transparent suggestions about the closeness of the antechamber, the noise of the chanting priests, the reviving freshness of the morning air.

Victor Blaize hid a faint smile with his blood-stained handkerchief. His wife looked away to hide the quiver of impotent rage which shook her for an instant. Few people were more conversant with Oriental ideas than they, and none knew better the immobility of superstition before argument. But—"Lot thinks of such clever things," she said, almost blithely,

over a choke in the throat; and—"Truth to tell, I'm tired of these walls," said he. "I think I should like to be where I could see the Sun Bridge."

The coolies hastily pulled up the pegs of the black skin tent, and in that, as in a litter, they carried him where he could see it—a great golden giant with silver hair, king of the vast system of mountains and gorges through which the infant Yang-tze cuts its way to power.

"The noblest mountain in the world," he murmured to his wife, who sat propped beside him against the trunk of the sacred fig-tree, with her arm about his neck. And then: "I do not think I shall die to-day," he said. "If I feel as strong as this to-morrow, I will have you get out the map of my route, and we will correct it, so that at least can be published. Ah, Winifred, I meant to do so much!"

"You *have* done so much," she answered, indignantly. "Even when you took the beaten track, every one says you saw and told more than all who went before you. Are you still grieving over those wretched drowned notes?"

"I cannot help it," he said, sadly. "It leaves the book so unfinished. You know as well as I how the unexplored beckons, and scarcely any one has studied these aborigines tucked away in the mountains—the most interesting people in all Asia, the only true Chinese. And Tibet itself—I had some vague idea of pushing on there, if I passed through the border country safely, of perhaps tracing and charting the beginnings of the Yang-tze accurately—of perhaps reaching L'hasa itself. It would have been the only recompense for leaving you behind for once."

"All the recompense for leaving me behind for once," she said, with her first sob, "is that now you must leave me behind forever."

"Dear, it might have happened anywhere. Just one night astray on a mountain; a heavy snow-storm, such as we have often experienced together—it would have been nothing, if the medicines and my journal had not been in the load lost with that one pony swept down the stream the night before. My poor journal! I regret it as much as my life."

She looked up at him with one of those wonderful smiles which women summon for their dying.

"Shall *I* finish your book?" she asked. "Come back here some day—I could not do it now—stay among the Man-tze as you did, perhaps dare Tibet—"

"No, no!" he interrupted, feverishly. The light had flashed up in his eyes like a dying flame suddenly fed. "You have borne enough dangers, with my arm about you to protect you. Though I found the mountain folk kind and hospitable. Yet for a woman—I will not hear of Tibet; it would be impossible. If any woman could do it, it would be you. But no, I could not ask it."

"You have not asked it," she reminded him, softly. "But I have promised. You must not let it excite you. See! the priests have sent you some more *dzo*-milk by Lot. They are not half bad."

"But they are twice paid," he remarked, with weak humor.

He drank the queer cheesy fluid with a disgusted contraction of the nostrils, then laid his head back against the trunk of the fig-tree and closed his eyes as

though tired. In a moment he was asleep. Winifred knew it to be a bad sign. She gazed steadily, stonily out on the Sun Bridge, which had been her guiding beacon ever since she had set out from Sui-Fu in panic-stricken haste, to meet the husband whom panting runners had told her was returning to die in her arms.

It had been a silent, slow, stumbling journey, interrupted by every obstacle with which grim Circumstance loves to handicap frantic haste—mostly taken by foot, for the Chin Ho, a narrow ribbon of waterfalls, forbids the boldest boat beyond Ping Shan. Here at the temple she had overtaken him, and here, after three days of lavish payment and scrupulous consideration for the inconceivable minutiæ of Buddhist convention, her husband, Victor Blaize, a man known and honored wherever Science has passed beyond her infancy, was turned outdoors like some unclean thing to die. She would not allow herself the indignantly beating heart, the hot tear, which might arouse the beloved sleeper on her bosom. After all, what did it matter, since die he must?

A sound in the grass was Lot, pulling himself awkwardly along on elbows, like a wooden-jointed toy serpent. "Is it come?" his anxious eyes asked her. While they watched, the sudden stroke of a drum, not sharp, but discordant, sounded from the temple. On the instant the depressing drone of a dreary ritual, from which thirsting souls drained the last drop of life centuries ago, rose to waken the sleeping white man. He opened his eyes, to smile languidly. Lot crept noiselessly away, satisfied.

"I have only been thinking," he said. "Wini-

fred! it has been a success, our ten years, has it not?"

"For me," she answered, raising her eyes to his before she realized the tears in them. They were eyes that blended exquisitely with the natural chestnut of her short, soft, curly locks and the superimposed tinge of duskiness on her naturally fair skin—cinnamon-brown eyes, with lights of veritable yellow, under delicate pencilled black brows. Hers was a face not girlish, but elusively suggestive of both the boy and the woman—the bold unconscious innocence of the one, the depth and grace and poise of the other; her eyes all boy, her mouth all woman. Even the vacuous, sodden-spirited coolies who rowed her boats and pulled her rickshas recognized in her a presence. She was the sort of woman who could drop the tears unperceived on her husband's thick dark hair while she kissed his forehead, and murmur, almost merrily, with her arms about his neck:

"And for you, a success really? You remember how Sister Hortense said that such a tomboy could never, never make a good wife?"

He nodded; then, wistfully; "But it came hard on you—some ways." Perceptibly he was growing weaker. "No home, no luxuries, no society save mine—and after ten years so little—laid up. A rolling stone gathers—his wife—no moss."

"Listen," she said, very tenderly. "We have talked over this thing before. Until you came into my life full of home and luxuries and society, I was so tired, so tired of it! and did not know why—nor do I know now. I wanted the open, instead of whist clubs and

gymnasiums; I wanted the unknown, instead of a maddening routine millions of women had lived through and died of, years before I was born. I chafed—ah, you know it! you who chafed too. . . . You gave me all I wanted," she added, after a pause. "What do I care for civilization? I was always at odds with it; or for money? the only way to gain that would be for you to tie to a desk all day and come home in crowded cars at night, with the evening newspaper in your hand, to hear me chronicle small-beer and ask you if you liked the gown my new dressmaker had made, and tell you who called—oh, what a travesty on life, for us, at all events! Better our cycle of Cathay and India and other places where the civilization does not fret us, because it is not our own!"

"Two born vagrants," he whispered. "Made for one another. One more word, Winifred, before I get too weak. . . . I think I shall die to-day, after all."

A great loud sob burst from the ground somewhere near. They had not known Lot had crawled back into hearing.

"Poor Lot!" said his master. "He will never leave you while you want him. He promised. And you promised too—about the book. It is not too much?"

"No."

"And about—some other man. Promise to take him if you love him. He would be a man, or you could not care for him. I do not want to be selfish from my grave."

She only made a sound in her throat for an answer. The ululations of the priestly chant had ceased, and they could see a small guard of seven or eight rigid red-clad

figures grouped, by assumed accident, before the temple threshold which they were resolved the desecrating white man's body should never pass. Lot ground his teeth; but Winifred could almost have laughed. So exceeding bitter are some moments that tears are not strong enough. Life's last horror was coming upon her, and she realized that in the secret insanity of hope she had not realized it until this very second.

"What is it?" began Victor Blaize's lips, feebly. She bent down. "What is it?" he repeated, dreamily. "Something about sad—dark—there, do you hear that bird?" They did not. "That's it—a poem—'sad and strange'—'dark summer dawns'—'the earliest pipe of half-awakened birds'—why, Winifred, my voice is getting stronger—'dying ears and dying eyes'—I must be looking at the Sun Bridge, but I cannot see it."

"I may be beyond it already," he added, still more dreamily. "I always wanted to be an explorer. . . . Dearest." His head fell heavily. They had not expected the moment quite so soon.

* * * * * * *

Again the priests were chanting, but the ululation was no longer a succession of stabs on a quivering heart. To their sound the sun was rolling more swiftly with every moment toward the western mountain he nightly crossed into darkness. Winifred Blaize coldly counted the notes of the one, almost watched the progress of the other, by means of that strange irrelevant underconsciousness that toys with the intense misery which it knows will in an instant roll over like a wave and drown it. Her real eyes were fixed on a stark form close at her side, which she would not let Lot reverently cover; her

true ears strained for some echo of that comfort it seemed the universe owed her. She had long since let go her hold on a certain seamless garment from which much healing has gone out into the world. There was a thing called Theosophy—she had dabbled in it; but when one's husband has just died it seems to have very little to say. And Lot would come to her, more than once, though more than once rebuffed, with a hesitating question which appeared so absurdly immaterial:

"There is the cemetery at Shanghai," he humbly suggested, "if madame does not wish to take It to America. And these Chinese know so much about embalming."

Winifred did not answer. He had long thought her the strangest woman in the world. But some rapidly nearing specks of black against the bright sky made him suddenly shiver at the thought he could not express, and nerved him to desperation.

"Madame really must decide," he said, more firmly. The baleful specks would put forth wings the next minute. "Of course, the priests would let us bury him anywhere outside the temple grounds, and I would carve out a cross to mark the spot."

"We will do that," said Winifred, apathetically.

The coolies hollowed out the grave, a little distance down the mountain slope, under an olive-tree, and Lot whittled out the cross, which she let him do because she felt it would be a comfort to him.

For the same reason she allowed him to read a portion of the service from the prayerbook Matang, the one Christian coolie, carried. It seemed to be wholly an affair between Matang and Lot, and she gazed off between the trees while they read it—not dry-eyed,

despite the sentimental theory that deepest grief is tearless, but with quiet, hopeless tears streaming down her face, and tasting bitter in her mouth. To one detail she paid some notice: she insisted that the body be wrapped in the Mongol tent of black skin, in place of the coffin which could not be made at once.

"That leaves madame no shelter but the traveling chair," objected Lot, "should we halt at night where there are no inns. Her head—"

She turned on him passionately.

"What of my head?" she asked. "It seems as though I shall never care again what falls on it."

"Yes, it seems so," agreed the man, with blundering sympathy; "but madame knows she will."

"Perhaps so," she replied, very wearily. The Sun Bridge looked to be slowly darkening the world, hiding her husband's grave, with everything else, from her eyes. "All I know now is that he is gone, and taken with him my last smile."

CHAPTER I.

A VERY IMPORTANT PERSON.

"HAS the ex-mandarin come yet?" asked Dr. Russell, in an undertone, putting her head in Miss Courtland's room, which was also the school-room mornings and the reception-room afternoons and evenings, and indeed at all times save when the canvas cot, standing up stark and stiff in a screened corner, was not pulled down and its wearied owner lying on it in the stupefied sleep of the just, who are always overworked. Quarters were crowded at the American Mission.

"The ex-man, you mean," answered Miss Courtland, disgustedly. The twenty Chinese children, chattering eagerly in a group about a rather silent central figure, paid very little heed to the two teachers, and she raised her voice a little. "Yes, he's come. Oh, how I'm growing to hate these sexless things in flapping bloomers and not enough of a moustache to make a penny paint-brush of! I wonder what he was ex-ed for? Do you suppose he is to be trusted with Candace? Mr. Roberts said something about a young son."

"He's outside, peeping in the windows at the girls," answered Dr. Russell, drily, "while Mr. Frere and his papa exchange compliments. He seems a mild, harmless creature; so we will not interfere until he does worse than that."

"Oh, no!" assented the other. She was a young, homesick thing, not out from America a year, but already she had learned that privacy is an idea incommunicable to the Chinese intelligence. That any human being not stone blind should be outside a window and refrain from looking in was too much to expect, and she did not expect it. Even as she answered, the boy's head—big and broad, with solemn slanting eyes and an innocent mouth—appeared over the sill, and did not bob down abashed before her gaze, as would a Caucasian urchin's. A sudden idea, however, struck the missionary with fear.

"After all, the girl is thirteen! Do you suppose Mr. Roberts—oh, no, he *couldn't* think of arranging a marriage between them. Candace is a big-foot girl, and he is a heathen, thank Heaven!"

"For which fact are you thankful?" asked Dr. Russell, wickedly.—"Come, let us ask that old woman out in the chair to come in and have some refreshment. She looks vicious, but I suppose she is the ex-mandarin's mother."

"Will not your ancient and venerated mother come inside and partake of tea with the ladies?" Mr. Frere, the head of the mission, was asking that very minute of the personage seated in the chair of honor in the small but airy reception-room across the hall. By nights it was his and Mrs. Frere's bedroom.

"She does not like foreigners," replied Hu Sing, tea merchant of Wuhu and ex-government official of importance, as he had been described in the letter commissioning him to take home Candace Roberts. "Sometimes she spits at them."

"Hu Sing!" There was an astounding volume to the voice which reached them from the courtyard. It had the sudden force of an explosion, coupled with the vibration and staying power of a bull's bellow; and it all came out of the crooked mouth of a wizened little woman who thrust her head out of the chair window, and repeated her call again and again. "Hu Sing, my son! Hasten! Get the big-foot girl and be gone. We shall lose the tide."

"I feel honored at having within my doors one of such virtuous character and commanding dignity that the Reverend Mr. Roberts would entrust him with his daughter," remarked Mr. Frere, smoothly, trying to ignore those distracting calls as successfully as did the impassive Oriental. "You know, probably, that before his health broke down Mr. Roberts was one of our workers here, and though married to a Chinese woman, he is still a citizen of the United States; and so is Candace"—"I hope," his conscience suggestively interpolated. For the hundredth time since taking up residence in China he wished that before coming thither he had spent more time in studying these matters. "The United States is a great country and has a large army." For the thousandth time he wished it were larger. "I tell you this," he added, "so that you may impress upon any river pirates or other dangerous persons you might encounter that she is a *very* important person."

"Hu Sing!" reverberated the voice from the chair, whose owner, with peculiar appropriateness to Anglo-Saxon ears, was named Chin Loo. "Bring the big-foot girl!"

That she was an important person in the mission

Candace Roberts had always been made to feel, though not so strongly as to spoil her. To doubt it to-day would have required a monster of humility. She stood, a serious-faced little girl of thirteen, in her best clothes, with a European traveling-bag beside her, on which all the smaller children were climbing to fondle her tunic of white silk, with wide sleeves banded with embroidery done by Mrs. Frere's own fingers, or to touch the shining black hair, arranged for the first time in the elaborate coiffure of the marriageable young woman. Around her was an incessant click of rapid guttural voices, only comparable to the noise in the telegraph-room of a great newspaper.

"Candace, you will write, of course?"—"Yes, she promised to write one letter a month to the whole of us."—"Candace, will your father open a mission school with you for teacher? Just think of Candace teaching!"—"Perhaps they are bringing you home to be married. Just think of Candace married, girls!"

"I am in no hurry to be married," answered Candace, self-consciously, and quite sincerely. Modern ideas could not be kept out of the little schoolroom where she had practically spent her life, and many a disappointed mother-in-law (supposing that the "elephant-footed" little Christianized girls were lucky enough to find such things) was destined to grind her teeth over the viper of insubordination she had taken to her unsuspecting bosom. And Candace, the daughter of a foreign devil and a native convert, possessed stronger "views" than any of them, and better prospects of the fortune for which all longed secretly—

that of marrying a missionary and being treated as they daily saw Mr. Frere treat Mrs. Frere.

"Don't you wish your father had come for you himself?" asked an older pupil. "I'd love to see Mr. Roberts again; he was so jolly and told such funny stories."

"Oh, Mr. Roberts—*yes!*" sighed another big girl, ecstatically. "He used to swing us little things up on his shoulder."

Candace sighed too. Privately she was rather afraid of the ex-mandarin and the old lady with the terrible voice. But she came of a race to which "face" is dearer than life, and she shook her head stolidly.

"My father will meet me in a house-boat, and take me to his farm at Wuhu," she said. "I suppose the farm needs so much management he can't leave it, particularly now that his health is so poor."

"Candace!" said a voice from the doorway—that of a person of authority as absolute and beloved in the great household as that of a Pope of the early Church. She looked up affectionately at Mr. Frere, startled into the thought that, after all, she was going to leave him. Hu Sing was at his side.

"This is the young lady, Miss Roberts," said Mr. Frere, with significant formality. Candace had never been addressed by that foreign title before, and the ex-mandarin looked the unpretentious child over very much as though he grudged it her. "Is she ready?" was all he said.

"As soon as we have said good-by—why, where is Mrs. Frere?"

"In the linen-room," chorused a number of shrill

voices. "Crying," added some others. "Over Candace going away," supplemented still others. Candace's own eyes moistened. She began to realize that the occasion was a solemn one.

Mr. Frere abruptly turned and sought the linen-room —a mere cupboard, too small for even a missionary to sleep in, in which the towels and pillow-cases were kept, and the girls reprimanded, and letters from home read, since it could not possibly hold the squads of inquisitive female visitors who came all day, by tens and twenties, to see how foreign women lived. Here his wife was crying, with her head on a pile of clean sheets.

"Dearest"—began Mr. Frere, but she interrupted him with a sob: "Don't say it. I know I am foolish; but oh, why doesn't he come himself? There is something strange and wrong in the whole matter, and has been for a long time; you know it, I feel it, the teachers suspect it, and here we are sending Candace out into it, in charge of a heathen man and an old woman with a wicked voice —I heard it. I had hoped that we might keep her here always. Think what a help with the younger ones she would be!"

"She is her parents' property. And one is an American, and both are Christians. The letter is undoubtedly genuine." He took it from her hand—a tear-stained twist of paper—and read it aloud, reassuringly:

"WUHU, March, 1898.

"DEAR BROTHER FRERE—After a long struggle with myself, I have concluded to call Candace home. Her mother's health, as well as mine, is now failing; we have been obliged, through bad luck with our crops, to dismiss our one servant; and we long to see our child again."

"Isn't that natural enough, dear?"

"An eminent tea-merchant and ex-government official of Wuhu, named Hu Sing, will pass the mission within two or three weeks of this writing with his son, on his way back from Nanking, whither he is going to fulfill the pious duty, devolving on him through an older brother's death, of bringing to his roof his aged and honorable mother."

"You said, 'Pah! the man's getting to write like a Chinaman.' You know you did," interrupted Mrs. Frere.

The reader continued:

"He will bring Candace home under her care. I wish I could come for her myself; but, alas! it is a matter not only of health and strength, but of expense. I know you will be sorry to lose Candace; but her school days are over, and she can do much missionary work here at home. Believe me, my dear brother Frere, with the most affectionate remembrances for yourself and Mrs. Frere, and the warmest wishes for the prosperity of the mission,

"Ever your brother,

"FRANKLIN ROBERTS.

"P. S.—I am ashamed to ask—especially as I know your stipend has a thousand calls on it—but if you have any little sum you could conveniently spare and send me by Candace, I would be more than grateful, and would repay as soon as possible."

He laid the letter down and looked sorrowfully at his wife. A knock at the door broke their silence. It was Candace herself. "The honorable mandarin says we shall lose the tide," she said. Her face, not wholly Chinese in its features, was dimpling with excitement. Mrs. Frere pressed her own tear-streaming cheek against its rosy hope. "Dearest child," she said, chokingly. "Oh, take the best, the very best care of yourself! and write me a very full letter from home. Never forget you are a Christian, and if anything goes wrong—"

Her husband slipped away from their mingled tears and adjurations. Hu Sing stood glowering by his chair like a statue of a thunder-god. The missionary stepped close to him, driven by desperation to the predestinately hopeless attempt to meet an Oriental man to man. "What is the matter with Mr. Roberts?" he asked, quickly and directly.

Hu Sing answered apathetically, in the idiom of his language: "Mr. Roberts is well, though ill. His daughter shall be safely delivered to him. Where is she?"

She came joyously clattering down the steps leading into the courtyard, with Mrs. Frere's tears yet undried on her cheeks. She had never before ridden in a chair, the prerogative of the fortunate-unhappy possessors of the "golden lily feet," which she had been taught to regard as horrible distorted hoofs. Chin Loo had them, as beseemed the mother of an ex-government official, and she thrust a face like a gargoyle out through the curtained window, and gazed balefully behind her at the chair into which Candace, with more haste than ceremony, was inducted. As the runners started the small, slightly shabby procession at a brisk trot, the weeping girls on the mission steps heard her raucous voice repeating, keeping time with every jolt, "Gods and demons, what feet! what *feet!*" then, in the increasing distance, more faintly yet even more spitefully than ever, "Gods and demons! they are not feet, they are houses!"

CHAPTER II.

THE YIN.

CANDACE had now spent two days on a house-boat. Her father was due at any hour or moment, and with immovable eyes fixed on the moving horizon, she watched for the sails of his boat.

Not that she was unhappy, save that the house-boat struck somewhat rudely on her fatally cultivated sensibilities. At the mission everything was plain, but clean—dreamily clean, it seemed already to Candace, looking about her now. The boat was a double-decked affair, overflowing with population, very much like the Ark in the illustrated Scripture story-books she had taken as prizes at school, and the longer she stayed in it, the more difficult it was to withstand the impression that it *was* the Ark, and had not been swept since the Noah family and their livestock had inhabited it.

Outside of dirt, the trip was interesting. In a country where an immense proportion of the population never sleeps or eats on land, it would have been hard to find a child so unfamiliar with its great river life as Candace. But she had always lived in the town, nearly always in the mission, and in her whole secluded existence she had never stood in the open stern of one of the dozens of boats which, fastened one to the other like oddly different links in a long chain, and led off by a

steam launch, ply up and down the Yang-tze amid inexpressible noise. And the snapping of the crackers! and the yelling of the boatmen! which muffled, though it did not overwhelm, the incessant explosions of invective in which Chin Loo, the mother of Hu Sing, outpoured her superabundant vitality on an ungrateful world.

"Son of demons, grandson of dogs!" she would shriek to the haggard-faced, civil-voiced captain, when a stoppage, for which the towing steam-launch alone was responsible, occurred. "We will never reach Wuhu. Hu Sing! unworthy offspring of virtuous parents, wretched harborer of child-eating Christians, why do you not chastise him? Burn the boat! cast the crew into the river! Gr-r-r-r! B-b-b—" and for a too brief instant her voice would die away into babblings of inarticulate rage, while Hu Sing smoked on, stolidly and—for a Chinese—disrespectfully. In one transport she snatched the pipe from his lips and threw it into the river, then almost frothed at the mouth because no one of the crew would dive for it. The captain cheerfully parted with his, and for another instant there was peace.

At first Candace was dreadfully frightened at these outbursts, and went up into the boat's second storey and plastered herself like an unhappy little postage-stamp against its highly insufficient railing, while Lin, the boy, hung wistfully around her, and assured her that his grandmother would not hurt her. Before the second day had dawned she found that this was true. Chin Loo glared at her, spoke virulently of her, but seldom directly addressed her, and then with a non-aggressiveness which seemed to cost her pain, for she would groan

long-sufferingly after. As for Hu Sing, he took no notice of anything save his pipe.

The girl was well fed, fairly lodged, and thoroughly let alone, save by Lin, whom she did not mind. His vast infantine curiosity, which out of her superior education she was so delightfully enabled to satisfy, his humble, open admiration, which made the girl suddenly conscious of her marriageable coiffure, and his awkward attempts to amuse his father's lonely little ward, won her heart, which was not of the hardest. But when, to quiet the vague feeling of depression which hovered lower and lower as the horizon widened and widened, and yet no father and mother, she interrogated him, he became hopelessly Oriental. Who says it is the Yankee who answers question with question?

"Is my father's farm large?" she asked, with a little catch of excitement in her voice, as the train of boats crawled, like a great caterpillar whose articulation did not match, past thrifty red-roofed homesteads, surrounded by fields where rice and rape, melons and figs, were too often supplanted by the beautiful, baleful white opium poppy against which Viceroys issue edicts and literati warn in vain. "As large as this? larger than that?"

"Yes," so stolidly and indiscriminately that Candace sighed.

"What is Wuhu like?" she asked next.

"Good place.—Have all mission girls such big feet as yours? Do you expect ever to get a husband? *Do* they eat children? Grandmother says they do. How is it you speak Chinese like us?"

"How is it I speak Chinese?" repeated the young girl. "Am I not Chinese?"

"You do not sacrifice to the tablets," said Lin, drawlingly. "Your feet cover the earth. Your father used to preach a strange religion. You are not Chinese."

"*Used* to?" Candace for once took her eyes off the horizon and faced the boy. "Used to?" she repeated, in a tone which demanded explanation.

"Used to preach a strange religion," Lin repeated, in a tone which withheld it.

A sudden terror fell on Candace. She clutched agonizingly at the receding vision of the mission home, where everything was comfortable, intelligible, familiar. It was rapidly being blotted out by the gray twilight of her second evening on this great evil river, where they drowned girl babies—and boys, too, when rice was scarce; where wicked gaudy flower-boats, laden with shameless women playing vinas, already twinkled with temptation in the form of string on string of lanterns. Despite them, and the rapidly-appearing lights on the other boats, the night swam dark before Candace's eyes. The great throbbing sense of loneliness with which she had been slowly sickening quickened into the acute fever of fear.

"Is my father *dead?*" she cried. "Where are you taking me? Oh, Mrs. Frere! father! mother! somebody! Lin!" for with the Mongolian nature, whose emotional pendulum ever vibrates between unnecessary calm and superfluous hysterics, she had American nerves.

"Cries like that attract the demons," shrilly gloated Chin Loo from the stern beneath. "Only a foreign pig with shameless feet would lose face before a strange male. Lah! Cah! Gr-r-r!"

"It is true about the demons," warned the boy. "And there is nothing to cry for. We are taking you to your father, as my father promised. He is not dead. He will meet you in a house-boat, as he promised."

"Cah! G-r-r!" commented a voice from below, whose lack of effect on the demons was enough to shake the devoutest faith in them, which was Lin's.

All that the Freres knew of the Roberts family, which for two years they had felt to be meagre and unsatisfactory enough, is due the reader. Candace knew still less. To her, as to the other older girls of the Ngan Kin Mission, her father was a sort of glorious tradition—a great, stalwart, merry-eyed man, who wore his cloth with dignity, despite his ability to keep a roomful of European guests in a gale of laughter and even make Orientals feebly smile. Coming out to China young and ardent, he attached himself to the Ngan Kin Mission, and eventually married its prize pupil, a girl with "golden lily" feet but a Christian rearing, a first edition of Candace herself.

Candace was born and christened and educated amid surroundings which formed the reminiscent dream of her young life. To girls from peasant homes—lucky if they were homes, not, as too often, mat huts of squatters, removed from terrace to terrace of the mud bank of the Yang-tze until the crafty river took them unawares and swept them to destruction in a night's rise—the modestly-furnished mission-house seemed palatial. To Candace it appeared at first as great a change from her father's dwelling as the filthy house-boat seemed today from it. A small stipend goes a great way in China, and Mrs. Roberts was an incredible economist. Year

by year, as memory faded, imagination laid glittering touches on the pretty, refined, but unpretentious little house where Candace had lived her red-letter days and eaten her white bread. Relating reminiscences to an admiring group of juniors did not tend to diminish the lustre of the picture, which finally, with perfect good faith on the child's part, could have been surpassed by no description of the beauties of the sacred, the unspeakable and unspoken Purple Palace of the inner unvisited Pekin, where dwelt the pale Emperor.

Then one day the house was dismantled, its movables packed, the ten-year-old Candace placed as a boarder at the mission school, where hitherto she had been only a day-scholar, and the Robertses left for a station further inland, where the field was less crowded and a missionary more needed, Mr. Roberts said. The Freres wondered whether they had innocently crowded him out, and felt grieved and guilty, for they loved the man. A year passed without report of the wonderful success which Mr. Roberts had sanguinely predicted of his new station, and without the establishment of the girls' school to which he was to recall Candace.

Next, like a thunderbolt, came the news that the inland mission had another incumbent, Mr. Roberts having given up evangelistic work to take a mercantile position, a small clerkship in an English firm of tea exporters. It must have been very small, for the payments for Candace's board and tuition came irregularly ever after. Mr. Roberts wrote them a long letter, explaining his action, which was caused by failing health. "Will he die?" the Freres asked of one an-

other, anxiously, and resolved to keep Candace. But they wished he could have died in the ministry.

He did not die, but wrote letters fewer and fewer, mostly to his daughter, whom he implored to remember that she was a Christian, but to forget that she was not all a Chinese. Then came a small but surprising legacy from America; he bought a farm near Wuhu, paid arrears of tuition for Candace, who swelled with magnificence among the girls as the daughter of a landed proprietor, but did not come to see her. The Freres were uneasy.

"I have my theory," said Mr. Frere to his wife, and would not tell it. It was that Mr. Roberts, despite the beautiful letters he wrote Candace, had abandoned the faith of Christ, as well as His ministry. The inconceivable enterprise of Buddhist priests has sown China and India thick with weapons against the "Jesus religion," in the form of neat little tracts, consisting of the works of Paine and Ingersoll, Renan and Huxley, translated into native dialects. Mr. Frere believed some of these had fallen into the hands of Candace's father, with destructive effect.

"And I have mine," said Mrs. Frere also—and was ashamed to tell it, since it suggested demoniac possession. Only the untruthful can live half a lifetime in a country where spiritualism reigns supreme and malignant, and deny all taint of the prevailing disease. It impregnates the breath of the nostrils and the food of which the physical being is built up, as the microbe theory obsesses civilized peoples. Mrs. Frere had ceased trying to persuade her girls that in these days there were no persons into whom

devils had entered. She had been pelted by too many of them.

* * * * * * *

"Lin! O Lin, chief caterpillar among all caterpillars of creation! Beastly offspring of a virtuous father and holy grandparents! Cease chattering with that apostate of the elephant foot, and come to family worship. The rice is ready, do you hear? Your father is even now lighting the incense-sticks, snail, serpent, friend of demons!"

The owner of this complex personality clattered below in a hurry, and Candace was left in the darkness, pressing her eyelids against the pole railing to keep back the tears. Through their blurry medium she saw the family on the deck below crouching and kotowing in united devotion before a small cheap idol in a lacquered shrine. The odor from the rice offering reminded her that she had eaten nothing since noon. She did not want anything. At home, at the mission, they too were having family worship.

Something touched her hand. It was a stick of incense. Lin slipped a whole bunch of it into her listless grasp, his large stupid eyes regarding her anxiously as he whispered, "Incense! I saw you had none. What's to prevent the demons coming up here and doing something to you as fast as we pray them away? It's our last bunch; my honorable grandmother will be in a rage to find it gone, but the captain of the boat will give her some, and all will be well."

Candace did not answer him. A light gleamed out from the thousands approaching on boats from the opposite direction, which she had settled in her mind was

her father's. Fascinated with hope, she rose mechanically to her feet, cruelly oblivious to poor Lin's incense-sticks, which fell on the deck and rolled over into the water. The boat plied nearer with a sort of nervous energy which denoted an impatient hand at the helm. Little cared Candace that it was one of the smallest and shabbiest she had yet seen in the ceaseless river procession—not much better than the one-room "egg-houses," where the poorest of the water-dwellers raise swarming families. Great holes, as though chewed by some gigantic moth, yawned in the matting sails which came nearer every moment, and in the cabin roof, also of matting; but it was to carry Candace to home, peace, luxury, and loving arms.

"It is my father," she said sedately to Lin. With the fine free step which wrung from the mandarin's mother exclamations of disdain, she descended and hurried to the lower deck, against which the other boat shot tremulously, with an impetuosity calculated to splinter its cockle-shell sides. A great gaunt man, in Chinese dress of course, sprang out and wound long weak arms about her, crying like a woman on her elaborately coiffured head:

"My girl! my darling! how tall you have grown! Why did they dress your hair that way? We won't let you marry for many a long year. Welcome ho—oh, quick, can you hold me up?"

His emaciated figure, heavy from bone-weight only, swayed over on Candace, who cried out with terror. The captain of the boat sprang forward to support him, while Hu Sing smoked cynically on, and the crouching old woman ceased gibbering indefinite curses, and began

to address herself seriously to gods and demons, whom she impartially offered equal opportunities of averting such ill luck as death on the journey. "A foreigner, too! a child-eater! Let such as him die and remain unburied, but not here! Cah! Lah! Throw him into the river before he dies, and the big-foot girl with him! G-r-r!"

"He will not die," said the captain, appeasingly. "See him now opening his eyes. It is nothing."

He did indeed open them, and feebly, then again with returning strength, repeat, "It is nothing." Even in the dim lantern-light his daughter could mark the mortal pallor of the skin hanging loosely on the bones of his face. The eyes were bright, then dull, then bright again, like a light fanned by a fitful wind. Nervous tremors ran up and down his body; but no one except Candace seemed frightened.

"It is the Yin," whispered one of the boatmen to another. "I ought to know. And he is a white man too." They helped him to his feet, and he took Candace's arm, half in fondness, half for support.

"Just a dizziness," he remarked, with a drawn smile. As they moved toward the boat's ledge to board the other craft, Hu Sing laid a hand on his arm, and at the same moment Hu Sing's son burst into loud babyish cries:

"The big-foot girl is going!" he wailed. "I like the big-foot girl! Let me go back to Wuhu in her boat, my father! I will never see her again!"

"Toad and child of toads!" bellowed the grandparent. "Thou wilt see more than enough of her at Wuhu, for these foreigners let their women go about

without shame. Lah! Cah! Shall I beat thee into silence?"

"The papers," said Hu Sing to the American, roughly. Candace had seen white men mobbed, but not thus cavalierly addressed by individuals. "I have done my part. She was well treated."

"Come into my cabin," said Mr. Roberts, hastily.

In a moment they were over the side of one boat into another, around which Candace gazed curiously, while her father and the Chinese fumbled over some papers on the cabin table. The other house-boat, which was manned by a large crew and meant for passenger traffic, was palatial beside this. Yet, even in its forlornity, it had the oddly complete arrangements made for comfort by the most philosophical people on the face of the earth—movable shutters for the bits of windows, equipments for washing, cooking and steering, all cleverly concentrated into the stern, so that one person, if so minded, could turn from tiller to tub and from tub to fire. A small cabin was set there like an egg-shell. Candace wondered if she were to sleep there, and thought it would be fun. Her spirits rose, especially when, looking around the cabin, she saw a number of the dear mementoes of the pretty home at Ngan Kin, which had so long lived in her dreams in the imperishable lustre of childhood's reminiscence.

"Why, there is the painted photograph of you when you were a little boy!" she exclaimed, when Hu Sing had left. "I *knew* the stockings were red! And the cushion my dead grandmother made out of little American flags,—and oh, the music-box! Why are there so many things here from the house? Is it

so long a journey? What is the little stern cabin like?"

She had raced up the deck to its doorway before her father could stop her, though he ran after her, awkwardly tripping over his long robes as though he had never worn them before. Plainly, he was very weak.

"Candace," he said, huskily, "don't go in. Your—your mother is in there. She has been very ill."

"Is she dead?" asked poor Candace, stonily, in a moment lifted a long way back into the atmosphere of mystery and apprehension which she dully felt must be normal, outside of Christian missions. She had taken it for granted that her mother had been left at Wuhu.

"No, no," said her father, eagerly; "not even in danger now, but sleeping. It would not be good to waken her, even to welcome you. See! you shall hear her breathing." Laying on her cold hand his own, far colder, and moist with heavy sweat, he pushed open the matting screen, and showed a wan-faced woman on a couch, sleeping profoundly. The movement of her breast was slight, but perceptible, and her father pulled the dazed girl back and shut the door.

"A breath might waken her," he said, rapidly, yet without lowering his voice. "And the smell of the medicine is not good for you."

It was a smell Candace vaguely associated with the operating-room of the hospital attached to the mission, and also with the streets of the shop district of Ngan Kin, which she had infrequently visited. She felt sobered, depressed, but followed her father back to the cabin. She was Chinese.

The cabin was hers to sleep in, Mr. Roberts told her,

and kissed her a sort of hasty and imperative good-night, as though to stop her questioning lips. He was going astern to navigate the boat.

She had dropped the matting flap which served as door, and commenced a simple disrobing process, when she heard a deep groan. Her father lay at full length on the deck, writhing as though in agony. "I cannot stand it!" burst from his lips; then, sharply, as his daughter's distressed face bent over him, "Candace, go back to bed. Did they teach you disobedience at the mission?"

Candace submissively crept back, to fight against tears —and fears. How ill her father must be, to speak to her so! Would both her parents die and leave her an orphan? But when she heard her father rise and go in the direction of the stern, and then felt the slow steady suction of the waves against the bottom of the boat, she gradually calmed, and finally slept. Once she drowsily roused to the thought that at the Ngan Kin home they had always had family prayers before bed-time. Ah, well, this was an unusual occasion — and the waves lapped soothingly again—and the strange sweetish smell of the medicine, like the scent of a decaying tuberose, came stronger and stronger from the little cabin upon the stern—and she slept again.

* * * * * * *

The eyes of the Yang-tze never close—the million lights which twinkle up and down, on shore and mid-stream, from junk and sampan, "egg-house" and revenue cutter, man-of-war and consequential modern steamer, superb in plush and gilding and aglitter with electricity. Neither does the great river-city hush its

voice for the benefit of any who may be sleeping—the sound of shouting and squabbling, loading and unloading, fire-crackers and toy pistols, set off, as many people set off pyrotechnics of profanity, from force of habit rather than from any especial call of the occasion. There is a certain acuteness about a Chinese hubbub which makes travelers, when they reach a newer civilization, oblivious to the racket of students at a football game and callous to Billingsgate amenities.

Candace had no experience of any other sort of hubbub to compare it with, and it had in fact lulled her to sleep almost as much as the lapping of the water; but in the thickest of the night she suddenly woke with a confused feeling that it had increased in a manner which somehow concerned her. The motion of the boat had changed, too—in fact, there was scarcely any motion at all, and yet they could not be stationary, for through the chinks of the matting curtain she saw lighted shores slipping by, and felt rude jolts as of other boats bumping. Each of these knocks was followed by fresh execrations and cries, and some one violently shoved the boat. She had common sense, together with that sixth sense of navigation which is put into Chinese children when they are made, like the knowledge of knitting into Breton girls, and it told her that they must be drifting.

Hastily robing herself, she raised the curtain and appeared on deck, to be greeted with a bewildering blur of lights and Babel of voices. Captains who had been shaking their fists, and half-naked sampan rowers who threatened the boat with oars, cried out, "There is some one in it, then! Get to your tiller, girl! You will break our decks! you will wreck our cargoes!"

With the blind human instinct of obedience, Candace flew frantically to the tiller and took a bewildered grasp of it, before she remembered how utterly and absurdly ignorant she was of steering. She was reminded of it by a severer bump and louder execrations from angrier voices than she had heard yet. An oar had been broken in the attempt to stave the boat off, and the infuriated boatman brutally flung the broken handle at her head. It missed her, but the shock cleared her senses of the daze of sleep, in which the dancing lights, the swaying boat, the excited shrieks, had seemed like an evil dream, and in the instant the tiller slipped from her nerveless hands. She had remembered her father. Why was he not there? What had happened? Had he fallen in one of his strange attacks over the deck into the hungry Yang-tze?

"Mother, *mother!*" cried the child, in an agony of fear. With the awkwardness of excitement she distractedly clawed the matting curtain of the little cabin door, trying to tear instead of simply to raise it. The sinister sweetish fumes of the drug inside came out to her through the opening so strongly as to no longer deceive even her, and the whole dark story was told in an instant. The curtain was pushed aside by a hand, feeble and skinny, yet stronger for the moment than her own, and the mother she had not seen for years, pale and bewildered, and shaking in every limb, stood before her. "Candace," she said, dully. Evidently she had but just awakened from the opium sleep. Behind her, on the table, burned the baleful little brazier whose use the girl could not help but know. On the floor lay a long inert form—that of Mr. Roberts. Both women knew there was no arousing him for hours.

"Candace," said the mother, appealingly, "I could not help it, my child. The Yin overtook me, and I would have died without the Smoke. I am very glad to have you back. And he—he promised not to touch it. We both promised. You must never learn what the Yin is, Candace. It is roaring lions inside you, and only the foreign Smoke can feed it. What has happened?"

Candace could not answer. That flaccid figure on the floor, worse than dead, held her eyes in a fascination of despair. This, then, explained everything. There is a Chinese proverb, "Don't kill your enemy; teach him to smoke opium." Nothing was so carefully inculcated into the Christianized Chinese children as the horror of the wicked gift of the West, the curse in whose crushing coils an already dying country writhes with pathetic resistance, a Laocoön among the nations. The Chinese in her thought of the river at once. But a horror of that also had been stamped into the Caucasian part of her being.

Her mother sat down weakly on the rumpled couch. "What has happened?" she repeated, irritably.

Still Candace, without speaking, kept both hands clasped over her bursting little heart. The illimitable despair of youth was upon her, and there was no mother's comfort for it. The woman who had borne her surveyed her with the same remote and irresponsible compassion with which some white lady across the Pacific might hear of the case. "It is not so bad, Candace," she said, in her voice that came from "the hollow lotus-land."—"We still have the boat. Don't cry like that. It is not dutiful."

The words were scarcely out of her mouth when a crash came against the side of the boat, with the sound of cracking timber—the girl hoped it was their own—and amid a volley of shrieks and vituperations which compared with the previous uproar as a cannon to a toy pistol, two men—she could hear the heavy padding of four bare feet—jumped over on to the deck from some other craft. Then it was that she screamed aloud, and flung herself down on the tousled bed behind her mother. Nerves will not stand everything. One man rapped like a European on the cabin wall, while the other raised the curtain like an Oriental.

"Wretches!" he bawled, fiercely. "Why do you not tend your tiller? You have broken in our decks and let in water, and our mistress is wroth and wants to speak with you. She is cousin to the King of America and friend to our own purple Emperor, and is even now on her way to visit the Viceroy of the province, before whom she will lay your deeds."

"Hush!" said Lot. "There is no use lying that way to women."

He had chosen "pidgin" English for his aside.

"I speak good English," said Mrs. Roberts, unexpectedly. The men fell back in surprise. She drew her diminutive figure up into a pale dignity that amazed perhaps herself. "I am a Christian, but I have been asleep. Take me to your mistress, and I will explain."

Her tottering footsteps followed the men's, and Candace's hers, without an eyelid's flicker of light from the sleeping figure on the floor. A boat, with the sides badly but not fatally crushed in, loomed up, while the

tall figure of a woman, the most beautiful Candace had ever seen, stood indignantly awaiting their approach to speaking distance. Around them, with its racket temporarily suspended, was the crowd of water people, waiting, had either side only known it, to take the part of their countrymen or women against any foreign devil.

"Why did you neglect your tiller and drift into my boat?" inquired Mrs. Blaize, judicially. "Are you women responsible? Where is the man of your house?"

"Lady, he is sleeping," answered Mrs. Roberts, humbly, in English. She was bowing her forehead to the ground.

"Don't do that," ordered Mrs. Blaize, peremptorily. "I won't be kotowed to by a woman who speaks English. Do you know I could bring you to the yamen and collect great money for the damage you have done to my boat?" It was more than *she* knew.

"Lady, I will tell you the truth. We have no money. We can do nothing. We are two poor victims of the opium habit. My husband was a foreigner like you. He tried the Smoke, so as to know what it was like when he preached against it, for he was a missionary. Soon he smoked always and preached never, and I—I learned to smoke too. We had a farm, but we ran in debt to the opium merchant Hu Sing, and—he took it from us, and all we have now is this one boat and this one child—"

"Oh!" cried Candace. Lot seized her by the shoulders with rough kindness. "Don't faint," he directed. She did not know how. "What's the matter? are you hungry?"

"Yes," said the girl, drearily. "I mean no. I mean I don't understand."

Overcome by a physical sickness of despair, she leaned against the railing and tried to realize her future. Ought she not to escape from it? The river lay black and suggestive beneath her. Oh, those Ten Commandments they had taught her! "Thou shalt not kill" was one of them.

"Send the girl over to me, and I will spare you some rice." The foreign woman's voice reached her, grown soft and sorrowful, and like Mrs. Frere's. Only foreigners spoke so. Only out of China, or at least within the walls of its foreign missions, was there peace and cleanliness and hope in life. She crossed the plank thrown over the two splintered decks, in obedience to the woman's gesture, and stepped close up to her. On her lips was a half-shaped prayer: "Take me with you! Protect me! save me!"

But Mataug had brought the rice in a bowl. If she did not take it to those two helpless creatures who had brought her, equally helpless, into the world, where was their next meal to come from, not to mention the next after that, and the next?

"Honor thy father *and* thy mother, that thy *days* may be *long* in the *land* which the *Lord* thy God hath given thee." She had chanted it over in an unthinking staccato a thousand times in school—the one Christian law with which all the outside influences around her were in accord. To desert a parent? Oh, crime! With this world and the next in arms against her, where should she look?

"Do you speak English too?" asked Mrs. Blaize.

"Yes, madam."

"And do you smoke opium too?"

"No, madam," choking a little.

"Carry the rice carefully across the plank," admonished the foreign lady.

Candace took it dizzily across, gave it to her mother without a word, and turned to look behind her. The gang-plank of the foreigner's boat had been already drawn, and though the woman still stood in the bow, her deep wistful eyes were looking far beyond Candace's head into the black west, where, behind the Sun Bridge, she had buried her husband.

"Candace, cook the rice," said her mother, fretfully. The collapse from her brief assumption of dignity had come. "I am too weak. And you must learn to use the tiller."

"Yes, madam," said Candace.

CHAPTER III.

A SQUARE CHIN.

"It really seems as though the hardest part fell on me," said Mrs. Van Sant, with deep sympathy for the victim, stopping for a moment in the circumnavigation of the room which she allowed herself when she felt perfectly at home in her society. "And I don't say so without remembering that you too have things to bear, Michael. I speak of them to her often, I really do."

Mr. Traquair, of the British Embassy, murmured appreciatively over a sinking heart. A training in diplomacy has its uses outside office hours. If people would not speak so often to people of people, he privately believed Satan's occupation would be half gone. But he said, "You are always thinking of others, my dear Mrs. Van Sant," which was true enough.

"I know I am, and I know life would be so much easier if Winifred would only do the same. She does think of others, only always of the wrong ones. I suppose it could be called devotion to poor Victor, who *was* undoubtedly the best of men, but *is* undoubtedly dead, to insist on risking her neck among cannibals to finish his book, which is quite good enough as it stands. *I* would prefer to see her married, and to some one near home," meaningly, "and expending all that devotion

on him. You can't even call her Quixotic, for she is not righting wrongs, she's—"

"Wronging rights," supplied the man who wanted to marry her.

"Having her own way," amended Mrs. Van Sant, incisively. "You have noticed, haven't you, that Winifred, with all her good looks, has just the least touch of a square chin?"

"She had it from a child," she continued, disconsolately, "and in these two years since she came back to Washington, you have seen for yourself how little she cares for what is expected of her. I didn't so much mind her not wearing mourning, for that is quite a fad now—some of our best people don't do it. But it *did* produce a shock, when people asked her what she had done with the remains—or, as poor Count de Bonneville asked, 'the leavings'—to have her say she did not bring them on, for that is so *much* the thing! And then to learn that she did not so much as put up a gravestone!"

"You must remember that, according to her Theosophical belief, the body is nothing."

Mrs. Van Sant stopped in her walk so suddenly and emphatically as to suggest a stamp.

"Don't talk to me of her Theosophical *belief*," she said, sharply. "Her Theosophical grandmother! People don't believe in those things, they play with them. And it is perfectly consistent with Winifred's whole course to take up something that has had its day, and been exploded or exposed, or whatever it was they did with it, instead of Christian Science, which some of our best people are interested in. Then about her coming here. You are witness how hard it was to make her do it.

Pretty as she is, and always doing unusual things, she wanted to start a ménage of her own, and talked eternally of her being thirty, as if that were anything. I'd be only too thankful to be thirty myself."

"Have patience, and you will," said Traquair.

Mrs. Van Sant looked at him with an expression which said, "How can any woman refuse to marry *you?*" She would almost have married him herself, and there were maidens in Washington more lovely by far who would quite have done it. It seemed odd, on the face of things; for of family or fortune, or even rank in the diplomatic corps, Michael Traquair could make but a modest offer. In height he was slightly under the average; in the matter of good looks, only slightly over the average. But he could absolutely be depended on—to appear, with equal punctuality and sober devotion to the cause in hand, at social functions or at the office where he doggedly worked at the profession where promotion deferred maketh the heart sick. Every one knew that whosoever else lost his temper, Michael Traquair would keep his; that whosoever else forgot, he would remember; that whosoever else transgressed the chalk-line of law and order (Mrs. Blaize, for instance), he would be punctiliously and refreshingly faithful to conventions. When maids and matrons said he was "nice," they said it with the downward inflection of enthusiasm rather than the upward one of depreciation; while men said, "Traquair? oh, yes, he's solid."

"Winifred is keeping you waiting a long time," said her half-sister, sharply. "It's that boy, I suppose."

She rang the bell, and said to the servant who

answered it, "Find out if Mrs. Blaize received Mr. Traquair's card, and understands he is here."

"There's another thing that I call kindness to the wrong person," she continued in her stream of lament, from which she could never be diverted for very long. "A perfectly strange young man, who may be a burglar for all I know, though his linen is marked—"

"Different markings?" suggested Traquair.

"No, it's all 'L.L.;' but I don't know who he is, and *he* doesn't know who he is, and Winifred least of all. She only knew he fell down in a sunstroke before our house, and with all the sensible things there were to be done, she had to have him brought in, without asking whether or not it would suit *me*. Of course, she insists on paying for the nurse—as if I minded the expense, or anything but the high-handedness of it! I asked her why she did not send for a hospital ambulance, and she said—quite humbly, for her—that she had lived so long where there were no such things that she forgot all about them. That's Winifred's whole character!"

"I understand he is doing well," said Traquair.

"Oh, very well, for a sunstroke case, the nurse says. Only he can't remember his own name. They say he will come out of the daze soon. And Winifred is perfectly happy nursing him, though she pays some one else to do it. It's the love of ruling, Michael. That is the only consolation to me in your case: she is so fond of ruling, she may marry you for the sake of doing it; and if she doesn't, you won't be ruled."

The servant re-entered. "Mrs. Blaize is up in the top of the house, with the sick young gentleman, and she says, Will Mr. Traquair step up there?"

"Oh, I forgot!" exclaimed Mrs. Van Sant. "Michael, they think you will know him. He muttered your name once, and said 'Find at Embassy' quite clearly; so we are sure it is no one but you. Do you know any L.L.'s?"

"No burglars of that name," answered Traquair, following her out.

Quite at the top of the house, but in a large and comfortable, though dimly-lighted room, lay a long boyish form on a bed curtained and valanced after the new old fashion. He moved his head restlessly among the ice-bags, and muttered incessantly, stirring his long arms like feeble windmills. Curiosity-quickened though his interest in the invalid was, Traquair's first glance was for the woman in the room—not the dapper nurse in glistening white, but another, also in white,—a soft sea-foam thing, made of one silk tissue superimposed upon another and yet another, a vision of extravagant simplicity such as only French dressmakers can produce and only Mrs. Van Sant could have made her willful relative wear. Her tangly yellow-brown curls had been suffered to grow no longer than she wore them in the forests of South America and the wastes of Mongolia; they stood out like a halo around a face whose sun-brown was too deeply kissed in for two years of roofs and parasols to greatly modify it. For that immense piece out of a man's lifetime, a dozen years, she had been to Traquair the one woman in the world.

"Oh, Michael!" she exclaimed, with that easy contrition which is sure of its pardon. "Are they eating that dinner?"

"I hope so. They must otherwise be very hungry."

"It is an hour late, I know. But that poor boy," motioning toward the bed, "went to sleep while I was counting his pulse, and I was afraid to move my hand."

"Hullo, Traquair!" piped a faint voice from the cave of pillows. The Scotchman started, looked behind him, and then started again.

"Great heavens, it is Lambert Love!" he ejaculated.

"That's it," commented the invalid, calmly. "I told you so all along," turning to the nurse. "Son of—why, his name must be Love too. Didn't I come to Washington to see him, or something?"

"I hope not, if he is the son of Professor Love," said Winifred Blaize, in an undertone, "for *he* is a thousand miles away, studying the Hopi Indians."

"It is undoubtedly Lambert Love," said Traquair, crossing to the bed and looking down at him. "And with that moustache—the gall of him!"

"Was it yours?" asked the invalid's thin voice.

"He can't be nineteen," said Traquair, indignantly, to the others. His own lip-covering was of the lightest.

"Just wait—next birthday—and watch me do it," murmured the boy, indistinctly, with a trembling imitation of a cackle.

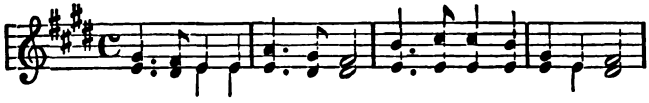
The nurse was delighted. "He is getting well," she said.

"I see the whole thing," said Traquair. "He must have run up to Washington after the Commencement to see his father, and this sickening June weather has been too much for him."

"It *is* sickening," agreed Mrs. Blaize, eagerly. "Too much so for dinner parties, don't you think? I do so hate them, and nothing now could save our characters,

save that nice little note you will write downstairs at my desk, explaining how illness in the house prevented my coming. You can send that off, together with a telegram to Professor Love, saying that his son is here, and ill."

"He won't come," said the voice from the ice-bags. He shook his head a little, and began, below his breath, in a thin, husky, sing-song voice, muttering something rhythmical, with a faint resemblance to:



The nurse bent her head to hear. "There it is again," she said. "It seems to run in his head."

"He has been singing or muttering that ever since his voice came to him," said Winifred, curiously, to Traquair. "Do you know what it is? *I* have lived too long among tom-toms to tell a college chorus from a Gregorian chant."

The sound from the bed abruptly ceased. Traquair, who had opened his own lips, closed them and shook his head, in obedience to a secret but imperative gesture from the sick boy, in whose cheeks burned a warning red. The nurse timidly whispered something about "too many people."

"Come into the garden," said Mrs. Blaize, but to only one person. "It is *years* too late for that dinner. I know you never broke an engagement before, and I want to make you do it."

On the way downstairs Mrs. Van Sant deposited a little side appeal in Traquair's ear. "*Do* talk to her

about that Fiji Island plan," she besought. "Of course, you and I know it is for poor Victor's sake, and because she loves to explore, but every one else will think she does it to get into the Sunday papers. One dreadful New York thing did have three mortal columns, and I said to her, candidly, when it appeared, 'Winifred, *now* do you suppose a Traquair would link his name with yours?' I always bring you in, Michael, as tactfully as I can."

"I know it," groaned Traquair.

In the dark and cool of the garden—such a dark and cool, weighted with such fragrance of rose and mock-orange, that the thought of steaming dishes and glaring candelabra seemed grotesque—he turned to Winifred, and asked, abruptly, "Would *you* break an engagement for my sake? or," more softly, "would you make one for my sake?"

"Neither," said Winifred, with great steadiness. "Michael, I did not bring you out here to propose to me, or to talk me out of my intention to start for China within the month. On the contrary, I mean to talk you into it. For one thing, with all your information, I don't believe you know what and where the Man-tze of Somo are. Sister Hortense has spoken of them to every one as the Fiji Islanders."

"I know all about them," said Traquair. "Have I not read your husband's book? They are the almost unknown and unstudied remnant of the non-Mongol aborigines of China, who live in semi-savage semi-independence on the border between China and Tibet. Their rulers are native Tao-tais—"

"Pronounce it Tu-tze," interrupted Winifred.

"Very well, Tu-tzes. Their religion is a corrupt Buddhism or a purified Lamaism, whichever you choose to call it. The Chinese call them 'Man-tze' or barbarians.—Am I not right thus far? You will mark me 'perfect' in geography, will you not?

"I may further remark that practically they are wholly out of the jurisdiction of the Chinese Imperial throne, or any other throne, human or Divine," he continued, suddenly dropping the light tone with which he began. "Any wrong which they might do a foreigner would go unavenged until doomsday, and they know it, in so far as they know anything. The Chinamen regard them as a set of mountain bandits and murderers, who resent the foreigner as bitterly as themselves or the Tibetans—"

"But they treated Victor so well," cried Winifred, eagerly.

"He was a man," said Traquair.

"But he told me again and again how simple they were, how hospitable and friendly. If I had never made him that promise, I should still long to see for myself that simple Stone-Age life which is being so rapidly crowded to the edge of the world. Michael, have you ever heard of the gipsy eye?"

The Scotchman smiled. "Yes. You have it."

"Hortense has told you, then! She read of it once when I was—oh, such a little thing! and it made a deep impression on her. I don't know when she first began telling me I must have gipsy blood in me—I thinks she feels our having had different mothers. Nothing else, she insists, can account for that restlessness I feel under roofs, that desire to get away from

forks and electricity and naval reviews. She says there is something in that sort of eye which savages and vagabonds—and I think she includes criminals—recognize as a signal of brotherhood; something piercing and wild and peculiar. Michael, it is all true of my heart, if not of my eye. Don't tease me to stay; I have so old a quarrel with civilization!" Tears were in her eyes, but the man did not see them in the dark.

"And we have so old a quarrel over that quarrel," he answered, in even tones. "It has always ended in your telling me that you suppose a British subject and a diplomat cannot help viewing the matter as I do. I too see the faults of civilization, Winifred—the strain and pain of it, the apparent cost in freedom; I too have chafed under it, conventional as you think me—"

She interrupted him with an exclamation.

"Oh, I wasn't born in a dress-suit," he answered, a little bitterly. "But I have read, and studied, and observed not a little on this very problem of civilization versus savagery, and, saving your presence, for I know you to be sincere, I think all the talk about happy savages, and happy animals, and happy everything-else-upon-earth-but-us, the most insufferable cant that was ever circulated by a few poseurs who mostly wanted a free field to break the Ten Commandments in."

"Theosophy is all Ten Commandments," said Winifred, seriously. "Only people don't understand that."

"Not even Theosophists, perhaps, when tempted to break them," subjoined Traquair, disrespectfully.

"I suppose," began Winifred, deliberately, "a British subject, who is also a diplomatic representative, who is in addition a Scotch Presbyterian, can't help having

your views. I never expect to make you acknowledge that Theosophy has any advantages over Christianity."

"I will admit that it saves pew-rent.—Don't try to wriggle away from your happy savage, Winifred; you have seen him, and you know he is not happy, not even so much so as I or the Queen of England. Say that physical well-being is all he requires: does he get it as often and hold it as surely as I—or, begging her pardon, our sovereign Victoria herself? His food is at the mercy of chance or the elements, his life at the mercy of ruthless enemies or wild beasts or irresistible disease, his mind—for he can't escape possessing one—the prey of every abject superstition that ever destroyed human tranquillity. Talk of the *tædium vitæ!* a man feels it none the less, probably all the more, because he cannot write pathetic sonnets on it." He stopped for breath.

"Michael," murmured the woman he loved, very softly and wistfully ("for her," as her half-sister would have put it), "I am ready to mark you perfect in logic—history—theology—oratory—everything. But it does not alter the way I feel. Perhaps I am a case of reversion. I merely know that the only years of my life were those ten I spent in wandering, as far away from civilization as Victor and I could get."

"And do you not know why they were the happiest?" asked the man, far more wistfully than she. "And do you not know now why you are restless and unsatisfied?"

Her bright innocent eyes like a boy's gazed full at him. "No," she said, in quite sincere surprise. "Why is it?"

"It is the search of heart for heart," he said, eagerly, plunging ahead with a reckless sweep of speech which would not permit interruption. "It is its mate the caged bird would fly to when it breaks its wings against the bars. You found yours, and though you do not know it, would have been contented with him in a New York flat or on a Kansas farm. Now it is the same loneliness with which you droop, though you do not know that; the old search on which your soul, at least, is unconsciously embarked."

Winifred's eyes burned brighter—whether with anger or another feeling. "That may be, although I had not thought it," she said, steadfastly. "But all the same, I shall go."

"Not alone," he plead. "A woman—you—oh, I cannot bear the thought of your loneliness, if nothing else! Listen: Professor Love is thinking of visiting Tibet, to study Lamaism for a book on comparative religions he is writing. He will go in six months or a year. If you would only wait so long, I know he would be willing to go by way of China instead of India, and—"

Winifred shook her square chin. "I am safer alone," she said, "and that old man would bore me more than all the solitudes of all the gorges of all the mountains. Lot, my Swiss servant, is a body-guard in himself. We can pick up Matang, the only coolie we trusted, in Shanghai, and I can always buy followers."

"Then—will you take me, at the lowest of prices?"

Winifred's eyes opened wide in the dark. "I am supposed to be unconventional," she said, quietly.

"But even *I* never thought of quite so—unusual—an arrangement as that."

"Winifred! You know very well there is nothing unusual in a woman's marrying a man who loves her. There is not even anything unusual in my suggesting that you do so, for this is the third time of asking, without counting that occasion twelve years ago, before you were out of school-dresses. I would go with you as the least exacting of husbands, the most faithful of followers, into whatever forgotten corner of a forsaken continent your gipsy eye might fancy."

"I believe you," said the woman. Her hand rested on his, but alas! with a fatal gentleness that had no meaning save a bitter one. It was not Michael Traquair's fault that he always looked as though he had just been brushed and dressed most immaculately for the most conventional of social functions. It was not exactly Winifred's, either, that a mental picture of his correct figure, with kind, intelligent, British eyes peering through twentieth-century nose-glasses perched on an aristocratic nose which inherited centuries of aversion for the odors of Asia the unblest, would not blend with that of a filthy house-boat being dragged up the dazzling cascades of the Yang-tze by sweating sans-culottes. She tried to think of him as soberly sleeping on swarming straw in an apartment crowded with chickens, if not pigs, with curious Chinese eyes glued to its thousand knot-holes, and a family coffin, with its well-embalmed occupant, cheerily substituting for other furniture. It was equally futile. She shook the chin again.

"I—I *like* you so," she said, brokenly, almost tenderly.

It was answer enough. He rose.

"You may some day want a protector," he said, quite naturally. The deepest love cannot feel a third refusal with the acute pain of the first. "You must send for me then. I will come to you anywhere, for anything, and ask no reward. I will have it in being of service to you. Remember this, if after a hundred years. You *know* I do not change."

"Oh, Michael!" Tears were streaming down her cheeks, and she held his hand quite tightly. "You are a rock, I know, and I wish I were a limpet, to cling to you, instead of—only a rolling stone!"

CHAPTER IV.

AN INTERLUDE: OTHERWISE, EMMA.

"My one reply has come," said Mrs. Blaize, cheerfully, entering Mrs. Van Sant's boudoir in a Japanese kimono, which that lady made no objection to her wearing, since they were just then at the uppermost wave-crest of fashion.

"Your one reply? to what?" Mrs. Van Sant raised her preoccupied eyes from the letters in her lap to the letter in her hand.

"Did I not solemnly promise you and Michael Traquair—"

"*Poor* Michael!" interrupted Mrs. Van Sant, with rebuking commiseration. Then she looked brighter, as people usually do after fulfilling the duty of making other people uncomfortable. "You don't mean the maid?" she asked. "Surely there were more answers than one? oh, surely? Why, I am always mobbed when I advertise. Let me see what you said."

Winifred unpinned the slip of newspaper from the top of her letter, and handed it to her sister, who read, with contracting brows, "'Lady's maid, highest wages' —*that's* foolish, Winifred; but why should it keep them away? 'Must be educated, intelligent, traveled'—you say nothing about hair-dressing, child, and that's twice as important; 'must be willing to accompany lady into

the unknown parts of China and Tibet.'—Winifred Blaize! Did I not charge you *especially* to explain that part on the steamer? 'Maid to travel' sounds definite enough. Yes, laugh if you will, but I'm sure the hardest part falls on me, sending my only sister out among savages, entirely alone."

"But I will not be alone," said Winifred, still laughing. "Listen to this: it is just what I want, or rather, what you want, for I much prefer to go without a maid:

"'DEAR MADAM—In reply to above advertisement, would respectfully state that I think I am just the person you are looking for. Have received a good New-England education; am at present librarian in the town of Essex, Massachusetts, to whose entire population I refer you for reference. Am settled in years, a widow by choice, a Unitarian in religion, healthy in constitution, and may say that in passing through life I meet with many persons who seem to me less intelligent than myself.'

—"I might be one of them, Hortense."

"Read on," said Hortense. "It sounds extremely promising."

"'I have always wanted dreadfully to visit far and foreign parts—the farther and foreigner the better—and would be willing to pay part of my traveling expenses, having over three hundred dollars saved up, for the sake of seeing the wild parts of the earth. Have visited Great Britain and Paris, but they was too civilized for me, and had very few points above my native town. I speak French pretty well, and English better, and in fact, the more I think about it, the more sure I am that I am just the person you want.

"'Hoping to hear from you, and waiting below in the hall to hear, I am Yours respectfully,

"'EMMA ALVINA GUTHRIE.'"

"Pay her own expenses!" ejaculated Mrs. Van Sant. "It's the most extraordinary thing I ever heard of.

She must be some adventuress. You mustn't take her, Winifred."

"Suit yourself," replied her sister, shrugging her shoulders. "She is your maid, not mine. My only part in the transaction is to pay her wages and endure her society. But I shall certainly see her, since she is waiting for it."

She did not stop to change her kimono. Mrs. Van Sant, however, assumed a distinctly appropriate house dress before entering one of the reception-rooms, where Winifred was already in conversation with a tall bony person in black, in one of the bonnets only worn by country widows, who clutched the heavy satchel in her lap with gaunt lace-mitted hands, as she gasped, in breathless eagerness:

"Land sakes, to think that Professor Blaize was your lamented! Why, you've just *got* to take me with you; I've read every one of his books; we've got 'em in the library."

She had sallow, high-boned cheeks, pale, alert eyes behind the inevitable spectacles, and the incomparable New-England air of capability a little too conscious of itself. Mrs. Van Sant felt instantly certain that here was the person to take care of her misguided young kinswoman.

"I've seen Paris," continued the candidate, disdainfully, "and, land sakes! I wouldn't want to be good enough to go there when I die. No danger, I guess. Why, it's as advanced as Essex. No; what I want is queer ways and queer people and out-of-the-way countries; I'm tired of slapping labels on books about 'em, and I druther see 'em. For one thing, there's a lot of

CHAPTER V.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

"It is then concluded?" asked the man from Turkestan.

The other, whose eyes were fixed deliriously on the bowl in which Lung Chao was rapidly twirling tiny balls out of a black dough, dreamily nodded in reply. It was not a Chinese gesture. The Turkestan trader, whose name the other did not know, opened his porcine eyes, distended his still more porcine nostrils, as in the desire to snuff up more information, stared at the almost obliterated features before him, and asked, "Are you a foreigner?"

The other man did not spring to his feet, which would have answered the question. He had not the strength. The dim eyes painfully sunken in his mummified head gave a faint flicker, the skeleton hand impatiently extended to Lung Chao's bowl trembled so that the black pellets dropped on the filthy floor, where he fished for them with ravenous eagerness among refuse inches deep. When his face came up—"No," was all he said.

"That is well," said the Tatar. Lung Chao handed him his pipe, and he stretched himself out comfortably on a hard slab near that on whose edge his companion was sitting. "I want no trouble; and foreign devils always make it. And your wife—she said 'Yes' once, and will not change it?"

The other man—or being, for there was left of him little but the bones of a man—feebly turned his head to a shelf behind them, where a woman lay with an opium pipe between her lips. Her wizened, dehumanized face, the tatters which covered her gaunt body, were not pleasant to see through a veil of smoke, but her husband took them as a matter of course. "She does not hear," he said, indifferently.

"I hear," said a voice which seemed to them all, even to its owner, to come from some ineffably remote place where nothing mattered. "Do as you will. It is not enough money, but we must have the Smoke. I am tired of begging ashes from rich men's pipes, and drinking them with hot water."

"And I too," said the rueful voice of another patron of Lung Chao's, who had just entered.

The Turkestan trader laughed brutally, as did several of the other occupants of the room. The new-comer, a coolie of the lowest class, with the wreck of a splendid physique, held out a lean imploring hand toward the bowl of black dough.

"Lung Chao," he began, "I am an old customer—"

The others laughed again—they had heard that preface so often before, and some of them had uttered it. But Lung Chao, who had heard it even more often, frowned, and went on distributing pipes to incoming customers whose palms had money in them. The other threw himself on the unspeakable floor and writhed, disturbing the others with his cries. "I will die," he moaned. "Oh, the gnawing! The Smoke is the only friend I have. This man is a monster, a demon. Hear, all of you! he is incensed because I borrowed a paltry

sum to go to an opium cure for a few months, instead of spending it upon him. Has he not already had my patrimony? and now he denies me a pinch of ashes from a burnt-out pipe. Wretch! Oh, most honorable, most virtuous and long-lived gentlemen, will not—Oh!" for Lung Chao, who did not himself use the drug he dispensed, had summarily thrust him out of the doorway with the only strong arm in the place.

No head was turned to see whether or not his struck the lintel. But in a few moments the man from Turkestan roused himself from the slow-stealing delicious stupor, to answer a remark made and forgotten years ago—or so it seemed, in this place of dreams.

"So far from being too little money," he observed, "it is too much, and if I do not like her when I see her I shall give less. You say she has big feet. Unless some Kansuh Mohammedan or northern Manchurian will buy her, that throws her back on my hands, and I must make a sing-song girlie of her."

The woman on the opposite shelf raised her head, half sat up—then dropped back from weakness on the pillowless bed. The dreamy deliberate words had penetrated the fantastic smoke-clouds that enwrapped her dying brain, her fast crumbling consciousness, and for a fleeting instant she was a mother. "A sing-song girlie?" she echoed. "Our Candace?"

Even as she spoke, the brief alarm was slipping from her, borne away on disappearing columns of the curling black smoke that healed all care. "Our Candace?" she repeated, already with apathy. On the whole, it seemed reasonable to believe it was another woman's Candace,

or that if it were not, all things were happening a long time ago a long distance away.

Lung Chao's unsleeping eyes twinkled anxiously. "You must have the Smoke, you know," he urged, sidling nearer, seeing long months of custom for himself in the overheard bargain.

"Yes, we must have—the—Smoke," she acquiesced, and her wrinkled lids closed over eyes so sunken they looked like mere slits.

Then a heavy silence fell upon the place—heavy with the odor of the pain-dispelling drug whose fascination accuses life, heavy with dreams in which the tortured spirit of man at last seems conqueror over time and space and circumstance. Lung Chao, whom no more customers came in to disturb, dreamed his opium dreams too—but with wide-open eyes and alert faculties, and with a solid foundation of silver taels, an increasing pile, in a great bank in English Shanghai. They were dreams of a large luxurious house where mandarins and wealthy foreigners reclined on sumptuous couches beside jeweled lamps, smoking opium of the first burning. No begging coolies, no dirty traders, no fallen foreigners, no white-faced girls peering wistfully in at the door, looking for their parents —as one was doing now—would mar the felicity of proprietor or patrons. That, now, was a dream!

* * * * * * *

Somewhere in the United States Consulate at Shanghai there was a long mirror. Emma Guthrie was trying to find it, descending stair after stair laboriously, peering at each landing into the open rooms to discover the elusive article of furnishing which had caught her eye

on the day of their arrival, now a week old. In spirit rather than in fact she tripped at each step over the flapping Chinese trousers she now wore for the first time.

"If I look as queer as I feel," she murmured, "I must be something rich. Where *is* that glass? Gracious, who's that coming? How am I going to stand it?"

She suddenly sat down on the steps, to bring the edge of her embroidered petticoat to the tops of what she called her "stocking-feeted shoes," also embroidered. In this she was not wholly successful. Women's dress in China varies from province to province, and though in progressive Shanghai the petticoat is usually worn long enough to conceal the trousers, this costume, which her mistress had bought for her in a shop without unfolding it, showed deviations from the prevailing pattern, which would not have disturbed Emma, had the deviations not been in an upward direction.

"Oh, it's only Matang," she observed, with relief, as more "stocking-feet" advanced over the polished floor. A week in foreign parts had been long enough for the Anglo-Saxon disdain for the native to communicate itself to her. She knew the house was empty save of Mrs. Blaize, who was busy with her Tibetan teacher, and the servants. Their hosts were attending one of the thousand entertainments of the thousand and one social organizations which make Shanghai a paradise of club-folk. The most hospitable as well as the gayest—or, as Mrs. Guthrie commented, the "triflingest"—city in the world, it overwhelmed its American visitor with invitations, whose number and insistence were redoubled when they learned she was the widow of a savant so

distinguished as Victor Blaize. But Winifred had looked alarmed, shaken her curly boy-head, and proposed that Emma should go in her place.

"I haven't crossed the Pacific to be disgraced by my table manners," she said, decidedly, to the Consul's wife, an old school friend. "I could have done that in Washington, and the only reason I didn't was because I will not go to these affairs. They bore me, they trouble me. I have eaten with my fingers, among people I needn't—and sometimes couldn't—talk to, for too many years to know how to behave in society. And it isn't worth learning over again, when I haven't yet half mastered the Tibetan language."

"Is Mrs. Blaize occupied with her Tibetan teacher?" asked her maid now of Matang. The instructor was an old lama, drifted eastward, with whom Professor Blaize had held such friendly relations that he was persuaded for a liberal compensation to teach the foreign woman his unbeautiful mother-tongue, without the slightest idea of the use to which she intended putting it.

Matang bowed. "She is, venerable lady," he replied, with hands crossed and head bent on his chest. The conception of a white servant had but imperfectly penetrated his consciousness, and he looked up to Lot and Emma as to superior beings, which was more than they did to one another.

Emma thought he was trying to avoid looking at her outlandish dress, and the blood crawled slowly up into her elderly cheeks. "I—I am going out to see the town, Matang," she said, with feigned jauntiness, "and I thought it might be as well to wear Chinese dress.

Tell Mis' Blaize I wore it, if she should ask for me before I get back."

For one week had Emma the adventurous been seeing the town, and been more and more disgusted each day with the disappointing civilization of the much-lauded "Model Settlement." "Electricity, land sakes!" she commented, in very much the same spirit with which philanthropists regard ostrich-feathers and puddings in the homes of the poor. "And flag pavements, and a park with a band, and a lib'ry! Everything I was tired of in Essex.—Is this what you like?" to her mistress.

"It is what I loathe," briefly. "We will be out of it in a few days."

"Not without seeing the Chinese city," reminded Emma. "I would love to see a real opium den in working order before I'm scalped by the Red Indians of China"—a phrase which it afforded her great enjoyment to employ, and which, judiciously introduced into letters directed to Essex, Massachusetts, U. S. A., set the smaller of the seven nephews blubbering and the older ones to envying consumedly the opportunities of their aunt.

Mrs. Blaize had only smiled, without taking her companion seriously. She spoke truly when she said that the effete and languorous side of Eastern life aroused her loathing. It was the great, fresh, fighting East—a West, by Shanghai reckoning—an East which had not received its Ten Commandments rather than one which had forgotten them—which drew to it her unexhausted vitality and stirred her venturous blood, untainted by the subtle poison of a melancholy leisure.

She knew Chinese slums and Chinese rows so well that she prudently avoided them when she could, and it never occurred to her that in Emma's New-England breast there could beat the inextinguishable longing of the respectable to see vice for once in its native hideous charm. So the next day but one before their departure for the interior found Emma, with mouth firmly set, sneaking out of the Consulate alone.

"It's all right for Mis' Blaize to be afraid," she remarked, to a person with whom she was on intimate conversational terms. "She's young and pretty, and anyway, is always doing queer things that attract attention. I'm different, and I'm bound to see one of those haunts of sin if I'm scalped for it." Nevertheless, she went so far as to invite Lot, by means of various obscure hints, to accompany and protect her—a proposal from which he drew back with alarm, almost with suspicion. And she herself would not trust the Chinaman Matang. "To be sure, he's a Christian heathen; but then I'm a heathen Christian, which evens things up, and I won't put myself in his power," she said. She had at last found the drawing-room with the long mirror, and was surveying herself in the costume, rich as that worn by Mrs. Blaize herself, of a mandarin's lady. It is the most comfortable dress in the world, but Emma did not find it so.

"The little boys in Essex who are so crazy to get into trousers can have a present of my sensations," she murmured, as she turned away. At the street door she wheeled back suddenly, and rushed upstairs for something, followed by the surprised eyes of the civil native porter.

"I never went out without it before, and I've got to wear it now if I'm scalped under it," she panted, tying its strings before the glass in a belligerent pin-wheel bow. "*I* couldn't see a woman peeking in a door in a black straw bonnet, even if she was dressed outlandish below, that I wouldn't know she was a decent middle-aged character, only maybe a little curious. And they say human nature is alike all over the world." Then she valiantly set forth for Chinese Shanghai, of even whose locality she had but a dim notion. "Follow the smells, I guess," she murmured, "and remember that in China everything goes right to left except what's upside down."

Shanghai proper, which is to say Shanghai foreign, does not recognize native Shanghai. Pompous British merchants open up little commerce with the busy trading city across the Huang-Hu; the chairs of foreign *grandes dames* are seldom set down before its fascinating shops. Antonio when interrogated about the Ghetto, or the ante-bellum planter's wife when asked if she often visited the slave quarters, or the average comfortable citizen when called upon to describe the interior of a pawnbroker's shop, might stare as the English-speaking pedestrians on the broad and beautiful Bund stared, when a "middle-aged character," in native dress and a chastened-looking black straw bonnet of the Essex vintage surmounting the tightly-frizzed false "front" of civilization and culture, pleasantly asked to be directed to the native city. No wonder Emma, who had never seen a slum, but had always wanted to, thrilled to the expectation of meeting the seven deadly sins when she finally found her way to its unspeakable and almost

unwadable streets, whose noisome slush rose up about the "stocking-feeted" shoes and dyed the obnoxious trousers a dirty green.

"Oh, my!" gasped Emma, feeling helplessly about for the accustomed train to lift. "Ain't it dreadful! I can't make a letter U of myself holding up these two disreputable bags out of the dirt. Ugh! what clothes! Do you walk backward or frontward in China, in a skirt that's back-pleated at the sides?"

She chatted freely with herself, secure in the consciousness that all those around her were foreigners, while her quick little eyes were taking in her unfamiliar surroundings with immense satisfaction. This was what she had left Essex, Massachusetts, to see: the narrow zigzag sidewalks, set out with booths of bewildering silks and embroideries and bijouterie which made her suddenly regret the three hundred and twenty-eight dollars she had prudently left in America, and then as suddenly remember that she did not know any Chinese in which to chaffer for them; the small squalid picturesque houses with ugly yellow children playing before them very much as her little nephews played, a marvel which she knew she ought to be able to get over, but was not; the beautiful curled roofs, adding a touch of art to the most hideous dwelling, of the more pretentious buildings, among which she searched for a pagoda as anxiously and fruitlessly as she had looked for rats and dogs among the odd collections of viands set out on the market-stands she passed. But the spirit of Emma was indomitable; the more China disappointed her previous expectations, the more it delighted her. She peered in at the temple, with its idols—real idols—before which worship-

pers burned actual incense, used here in sincere devotion, not for the profane purpose of keeping away mosquitoes, as the Essexians were wont to do of summer nights on their porches.

With exhilaration in her heart and unquenchable curiosity in her eyes, she stared in at the doors of elaborate tea-houses, where sedate merchants and anxious-looking clerks drank tea of such an aroma that Emma regretted, not the three hundred and twenty-eight dollars, but the necklace of copper cash she had left at the Consulate, in defiance of Winifred's axiom that in China—or anywhere—one should never stir abroad without one's money and one's weapon.

"I've the weapon all right, though," thought Emma, securely hugging it against her heart. "Good as a pistol, and can't explode. Don't believe these heathen ever saw one, since I suppose they sleep in those pigtails. Haven't needed it yet. I s'pose I'm taken for a China-woman."

Even as she mused, her bonnet was rudely jammed against her ear by a missile—a turnip, to give a point of detail—and a saucy boy, with eyes not unlike her fifth nephew's, sang out, "*Yang kweitze!*"

"*Yang kweitze!*" Emma returned the salutation, good-naturedly, picking up the turnip to see what they were like in China. The boy retreated, then advanced, with several other smaller youngsters who seemingly sprang up from the street stones, and also shouted "*Yang kweitze!*" and "*Yang kwo!*"

Emma smiled at them benevolently, then, turning her back, proceeded on her triumphal tour with bonnet askew. She was not going to straighten it for the

heathen; who knew but it had struck the Chinese angle? The boys, whose number was unobtrusively augmented from moment to moment, followed at a little distance, stopping when she stopped, moving when she moved, picking up sticks and stones on their way, and storing them in the wonderful Chinese sleeve, yet doing it all in such grave judicial silence that Emma, who would not have known enough to be frightened in any case, did not even know they were following.

"She looks in the doors for children," said a big raw-boned woman in a shop doorway. "See them stray after her!"

"She has given them powders and put them in a trance," said another woman, with great positiveness. "Has not my grandmother told me of these wizards? In a solitary place she will take out their hearts and eyes to make strange medicines. One should interfere."

"A demon, without doubt," said a third dame, more gaunt even than the first, accompanying a low voice with excited gestures. She craned her head to gaze at the disheveled back hair of the unconscious descendant of the witch-burning Puritans. "A Chinese to the neck, with a foreign devil's head. I will follow too," and she slipped into the procession, which a few men had already joined.

Meanwhile Emma, her explorer's satisfaction unmarred by any suspicion that she was being identified with the Pied Piper, was standing entranced before a hole in a matting portière, out of which came fumes that were making her deadly sick at her stomach even while they fired her imagination. Her gloating eyes passed from one detail to another of the strange scene; the

hard-lined yellow faces, to American eyes not yet dissociated by familiarity from the idea of crime and laundries, which lay upturned in speechless ecstacy of devotion to the God of Dreams; the burning braziers like so many sinister red eyes; the black fumes, deadly fragrance of the flower of forgetfulness—and after all, that *was* all, and Emma felt a slight sense of flatness and disappointment, to which the fumes themselves somewhat contributed.

It was the same at the next opium house—which she was now able to scent out for herself—and the next, and she murmured: "I wish now I'd done as I felt like, and slipped away to see 'The King of the Opium Ring' that night I stayed in New York with Abby Pratt, and she gave me tickets for a lecture on James Martineau. Plays are always more stirring than real life!"

She moved away regretfully, almost ready to go home. She might have doubted her ability to retrace her steps, had it been a sensible American city, but here in China, where she had learned that the very needle of the compass points sou' sou'west, she felt the serene irresponsibility of Alice in Looking-Glass Land. A small baby toddled by, smaller than any Emma had yet seen walking in China, and, unconscious of the anxious eyes of the unsuspected battalion she was leading, she yielded to a sudden impulse to pinch the round yellow cheek and see if it actually felt like American flesh.

The baby shrank away from the stranger, and in an instant Emma felt an avalanche on her back. One brawny arm—a feminine one—seized the bonnet by its bunch of violets, and in attempting to drag it off her

head half strangled her with the tightly-tied strings; another extended over her shoulder like a lightning-streak of vengeance to snatch the turnip, which was regarded as a charm-ball; while dozens of them (feeling like hundreds) seized her round the body to drag her back into the heart of a suddenly dancing, suddenly howling, suddenly and forcibly striking and pelting and spitting mob, whose very appearance was to her the most sudden thing of all. She did not know that their shouts meant "Child-eater! kidnapper! necromancer! fiend of a foreigner!" In fact, she did not know anything, except that they were trying to throw her down and trample her to pieces.

"Demon!" shrilly shrieked the very children, safely clinging to the arms of grown-up protectors, who found their pious work of pelting the accursed foreigner greatly impeded thereby. "You shall not have our eyes, nor our hearts or livers. We will have yours instead. Here is a stone, my father!"

The language of stones Emma could understand, and of clods of mud, and cudgels, which were rapidly whizzing about her head. Windows were being thrown open, shopkeepers surging out of their doors, women thrusting saffron-colored babies into their houses and bidding them stay there until the child-eater was killed, then joining in the rapidly increasing mob which pressed upon Emma with such shrieks and grimaces of hatred that a mere looker-on might have had an excuse for fainting.

"This is too much," said a portly seller of silks, with a frown. "It will bring all British Shanghai marching in arms against us, and we will be assessed a heavy

indemnity to pay for the fun of a few loafers. Has she really stolen a child?"

"I have done business with many foreigners, and they are not all evil," answered another merchant. "But this one seems able to defend herself. With what weapon is it?" For a heavy fist, striking Emma on the breast, had pressed against her something sharp and prickly which in an instant's inspiration was drawn and smartly slapped in the striker's face.

"A thousand needles!" he yelled, falling back. "Oh, my poor eyes! Take it from her! Oh, most learned of youthful sages! has she hurt you too?" for a young literate had received on his carefully shaven pate a crack from the stinging needles which astonished him even more than it pained him.

Emma gasped in relief as the furious pressure upon her person was for a moment relaxed, while her nearest assailants retreated from the unexpected counter-attack. "If it'd 've been a pistol, it'd 've exploded in a minute," she ejaculated, disconnectedly, obliged to even think in gasps. "Nothing like a wire hair-brush. There, take that, you heathen!" and she cracked another bald pate before the hand holding the hair-brush was seized by a somewhat puffy ringed hand which twisted it about rather tamely in her wrist, with great show and spluttering of fury. Under its cover he asked, shortly, in whispered "pidgin" English, "You b'long stealee child?"

"Child?" panted Emma. "Me? I wouldn't stoop to steal a cent, let alone one of your old children."

"Me b'long fiend, then," whispered back the merchant, answered by her expression rather than her

words. "You beatee, I pushee, talkee. We g'lout. See?"—"Foreign devil!" he shouted aloud, zealously. "Is there not another in the distance? Demons go in pairs, it is well known. Look to your children, honorable fathers and mothers. The new one—see, she slips in amongst us!" Emma was meantime laying about her vigorously with her uncanny weapon, which caused more, rather than less, alarm because it hurt so little. There was already a panic-stricken report among the hoodlums that it was poisoned.

"See! she vanishes!" shouted the merchant, pointing in the direction opposite from the archway toward which, with considerable cleverness, he was steering Emma. He had already caused a stampede, a thinning and disintegration, in the mob—all that he meant to cause. Nothing short of cannons or guile can disperse a mob when its blood is up: a little violence, a few policemen, are a dangerous thing, and no one knew it better than this respectable seller of teas. So he snatched a cudgel from a hand which was menacingly advancing it toward the foreigner, and sent it spinning in another direction.

"Take that, demon!" he bawled. "Catch her, venerable personages, before she vanishes as demons can. I will deal with this one."

They were near the archway now, and also, thanks to his manipulations, closer to the edge of the uneasy crowd, who turned their heads as he had meant them to, in search of the second demon—the more dangerous one who could vanish. The children, with the lively imagination of youth, had already been touched by her, they sobbed, and engrossed their parents' attention with

demands for reassurance. Some of them started to run, which considerably furthered the plans of Emma's new friend, as it set many of the grown people in frantic pursuit. "She leads them, the new demon, as the other one did. Catch them! save them!" ran from tongue to tongue.

"You stoopee," whispered the tea-man, breathlessly. "Now lun!"

Of course there was on the instant a hue and cry after their retreating backs. Up one alley of undreamed-of filth, and down another which made its predecessor seem clean, Emma's deliverer led her, with the shrill furious voices sounding dreadfully in their ears, until the respectable Lu Siang himself did not know where they were. They ran, in the stupidity of panic, long after the voices sounded too far and faint to threaten danger any more, until Emma, faint and gasping, looked as though she were going to die on Lu Siang's hands, for those inexplicable and all-capable foreigners to charge him with her murder; and in the worst fright of all, he abruptly pushed her into the nearest house, and, heartily weary in well-doing—and fast running—himself fled.

* * * * * * *

"Oh, a foreigner! Oh, lady! save me! help me! buy me! I speak English. Protect me!"

The rapid seizure of her knees by some person or persons unknown, the words even more rapidly poured out, in English as good as her own and a terror apparently greater, came upon poor Emma's dazed senses before they had had time to realize the last thing that had been done to her. Dimly, in fact as well as figure,

for a thin veil of black smoke clouded the atmosphere, she saw that she was in a room with two men, one figure of sex conjectural which lay rigidly upon a couch against the far wall, one woman with a sunken face of unearthly calm, whose chin rested weakly on her knees as she sat in what Emma considered "a mussy heap" on another even more mussy couch, and a haggard-faced girl who clutched Emma's shaking knees and implored her to save her. This was plainly an opium den; could the mere fumes produce an opium dream?

"Buy me, save me, merciful lady, Christian woman!" begged the girl, in an agony. "My own father and mother have sold me; I am a slave; I belong to that man!" pointing, with a shudder, to the Turkestan trader, who phlegmatically stood by, waiting till she should have calmed.

"A slave!" repeated Emma, incredulously. "I guess you're mistaken; it's contrary to the Sixteenth Amend—oh, land sakes, I keep forgetting I ain't in America! What's your name, anyway? You ain't Chinese, are you?"

"Candace Roberts," said the girl. "And I am *all* Chinese." She said it with a certain aggressive glibness, which showed that she was accustomed to having the statement challenged.

"Candace Roberts don't sound Chinese," said Emma, dogmatically. She was rapidly recovering herself. "Where's your father and mother? Is this the man they sold you to—a girl speaking English? Tell him I have three hundred and twenty-eight dollars home in America, and my check-book at the hotel—oh, goodness, I don't suppose the heathen will take a check!"

"I am her mother," in English said a remote voice from the bed. Emma started. She said afterward that those tones "clean spoiled stage ghosts for her."—"We sold her. What we did was good. All is well. She is our child. Go away and leave us, strange woman. I wish to dream some more."

"Father!" cried Candace, in heart-piercing tones. "Oh, if *he* would only wake up, he would change his mind, I know. Father! will you not keep the daughter who has begged food for you so often? Lady, he was not always like this, but he will not let it be known what he was. My father! oh, wake, and give back the money!"

Still the rigid figure on the couch remained immovable, and still the Turkestan trader stood stolid. He was purely a man of business. He had bought prettier girls and uglier girls than Candace; he had gained by them and he had lost by them, and if this foreigner—wealthy and insane, like all aliens—wished to repurchase her at an advance, it was trouble off his hands.

"I haven't any money with me," said Emma, helplessly, to the girl. She was unable to shake off the idea that she was witnessing a heavy melodrama at a cheap theatre.

"Candace, stop weeping and embracing the strange woman's knees," sounded from the couch. "It is undutiful. It is not bad to be a slave or a sing-song girlie; or if you are unhappy, there is the Foreign Smoke."

Emma's nostrils suddenly expanded. She had seen a slight tremor in the stiff limbs of the man who lay like dead on the couch against the wall. When people

were really asleep, Emma knew they relaxed, not tightened, their muscles. Before she could speak—and speak she assuredly would, in the judgment-hall of Rhadamanthus himself, if she had seen anything there deserving criticism—a strange sound startled them all: the clang of metal against the frail wooden wall of the house, two sharp strokes.

The man on the couch opened his eyes, but no one heeded him; for the matting portiére had been plucked aside by a man in the instant a woman's voice said, "Oh, they are wrong; she *couldn't* be in here!" and Emma, feeling the last jolt of the dream-kaleidoscope in which she seemed whirling, cried out, in a transport, "Oh, Lot! Oh, Mis' Blaize! come quick and buy this girl that they've sold for a sing-songer, whatever that may be!"

Their presence—supplemented by that of Matang and an imposing mounted policeman from British Shanghai—she took as completely natural, since she knew that they must have missed her, and did not know by what a lucky chance among a thousand they had found her in the vortex of narrow streets and hostile houses. And Mrs. Blaize had no time to put counter-questions, for Candace had upon the moment recognized her, and flung herself upon her.

"It is I!" she cried, with the sublime egotism of youth. "Do you not remember? our boat struck yours upon the Yang-tze, and you gave me some rice. Save me now! My parents only care for the Smoke, and they have sold me."

"Where are your parents?" demanded Mrs. Blaize, like Emma.

"Here," said an unexpected voice.

Shaking in every limb, and with eyes burning with misery, Franklin Roberts had dragged himself up, and was attempting to stand. Candace sprang to uphold him, but he fiercely waved her back. "She is not mine," he said, with great hollow gasping sobs, and the tears streaming down his flabby cheeks. "I sold her, when the Yin was on me. I would sell her again when it came again, and then—I would suffer hell again. Buy her, if you have money in your purse and pity in your heart. I was once an American."

"What do you ask for her?" asked Mrs. Blaize sharply of the Turkestan man. He named his price. "Lot, take him outside and pay him half," she said, briefly. "The air of this place stifles me."

"It's got the seven deadly sins in it," said Emma, who was justified in looking as pale as she did. Candace was kissing the unresponsive lips of her mother. Her father gathered her up in his lean arms with a look which made Winifred turn her own face away.

"I was once a Christian too," he said, hoarsely, over Candace's bowed and weeping head. "That accounts for what you're probably wondering—that I don't end a life like this with my own hands. Did you ever try the Smoke at all? It is heaven, and there is a long hell waiting for me in the Place Reserved."

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"What are you going to do with her?" asked Emma, when they reached the American Consulate under the safe guardianship of the mounted policeman; when her tale of adventure had been told, with her own comment that she supposed angels would fear to tread where she

"'She is not mine,' he said, with great hollow, gasping sobs."

had rushed, but that they were badly needed there. "What did it mean when the folks yelled '*Yang kweitze?*'" she asked.

"'Barbarian devil.'"

"Well, I called it back," said Emma with satisfaction, "though not understanding. The devil in it don't hit me especially, but I won't have the barbarian part, the word always meaning to me a long beard.—I s'pose the Lord understands this world," she added, "and it's a good thing, for I don't. Think of making a Chinaman! What did you say you were going to do with that girl?"

"Put her to bed, poor child. She says they slept out in the streets last night, and the night before that in a matting hut on the river-bank, out of which a gang of vagrants drove them before day-break."

"Yes, but after she wakes up? Put her back in that mission-school where she says she was educated?"

"Why, no," in some surprise. "I shall take her along on our journey. Is anything the matter?" for Emma's lips had shut with the spring of a secret drawer.

Her maid did not answer for several moments. Then, frigidly, "I don't suppose you will need me too?" she inquired.

"Are you tired of China already?"

"Me? tired? far from it. But I thought I could go back easier now than later, if you didn't want two maids. Maybe Candace or what-ever's her name, being younger and smarter"—she broke down and wiped away a resentful tear.

Mrs. Blaize gazed bewildered. She was totally, refreshingly unaware of the reasons why each of those

who came near to her wanted to stand nearer—in fact, nearest. But as she coaxed and comforted the nerve-ruffled maidservant, she realized with a rush of—amusement, I regret to say—that envy, whose other name is jealousy, occupies a place more or less prominent in the catalogue of the seven deadly sins.

CHAPTER VI.

A BOYCOTT ON THE YANG-TZE.

"UGH!" remarked Emma. "That's the twenty-eighth. Within five minutes, I mean. What are they?"

"That's the rice flea. Don't you like it?"

"One I might," with caution, "for a curiosity; or two or three for company to it. But they've kind of worn themselves out on me—or me on them. Will the Nancies, or whatever their name is, have 'em?"

"Scarcely, at that mountain altitude," promised her mistress. "But long before we reach it, you will have become callous to insects, and even miss them, when you go back to America, from the food you eat and the air you breathe."

"And the beds we don't sleep in," supplemented Emma, whose eyes were heavy and her temper edged from a night spent vertically instead of horizontally. It was the first she passed upon a native house-boat, the trip from Shanghai to Ichang having been made on a steamer. "I s'pose I mustn't murmur. You told me that when I came to China I must take the thick with the thin, but I didn't fully understand it was the insects that was thick. I haven't seen anything yet that was thin, except Candace here."

"And Candace is not so thin as she was," answered Mrs. Blaize, turning her head to smile at the girl so

sweetly that Emma covertly frowned, and felt around for a New-England conscience to suppress herself with.

It was indeed an almost re-created Candace who stood behind Winifred's chair, combing and fingering and caressing, in a dream of delight, the yellow-brown curls that framed in a sort of sunny blur the face she worshipped with all the innocent ardor of a soul but one generation removed from idols of wood and stone. Emma considered the combing operation silly. Did not Mrs. Blaize, at least so she hoped and s'posed, attend to her own hair morning and night, which was surely enough, with no one around her but heathens and women? And the curls themselves she regarded as something of a scandal in a grown woman and a widow, who would not yet be out of mourning if she had ever been in it. She herself had neither asked nor been asked to essay the role of the hair-dresser, only knowing, as she would have frankly confessed, how to scrape back her own scanty gray-striped locks into an excrescence the size of a walnut at the most artistically excruciating spot in the back of the female head. But it did seem to her weak and trifling to let that half-Chinese girl amuse herself that way.

"Don't break the teeth of that comb, Candace," she warned, tartly. "We're going where you can't buy them and wouldn't want to borrow them. What's Matang going through those contortions for? the Mania broken out again?"

The Mania was the latest addition to their band of personal servants over and above the hired coolie crew of the house-boat. He was a very young and very pessimistic person, with a penchant for suicide on the

strictly limited plan, which involved great outlay of stimulants, emetics, persuasions, sermons (these from Matang, his Christian fellow-countryman) and muscular exertion, on the part of those around him. As Mrs. Blaize remarked, to the horror of the serious-eyed Candace, he was always taking his life, but never taking enough of it. It was Matang whose imperfect command of English gave him his nickname, in the remark that he was "a complete mania on the substance of suicide." For Matang had been educated.

"He's been writing some more poitry, I suppose," observed Mrs. Guthrie, with disdain. The disdain was for the eagerness with which Candace left her post of coiffeuse plenipotentiary and favorite extraordinary, to run and take the queerly scrawled paper from Matang's fingers, with awe unspeakable. With her sixteen years she really belonged to an elder generation than Emma's, and to a land which prostrates itself and grovels before literature and learning. She thought it almost too great and strange a thing to write poetry, and had in fact been the first person to call Mrs. Blaize's attention to the writhings of Matang's muse.

That aspiring person's library consisted of an extremely small pocket dictionary of English, a medium-sized grammar which he had studied at mission-school, and an extremely bulky volume of "Representative English Verse" which he had bought in a Shanghai book-store, and which he carried under his arm even when cooking, Emma declared, to prevent the other coolies from stealing it. On this he now sat down and wriggled and simpered most helplessly while Candace respectfully read his poem. It was the deck of the boat

to which he had beckoned her from the cabin, little but not snug, where the women of the party "curled up by day and stayed awake by night," as Emma said, adding conscientiously that she must not murmur.

Murmur in admiration she sometimes did, however, as the cockle-shell of a boat parted the resistant, steely waters beneath them by force of sheer unrelaxing pathetic human industry, which somehow produced results miserably unequal to itself, so far as getting ahead was concerned. "You are used to boats propelled by meat," Mrs. Blaize would remind her: "this one is propelled by rice."

Winifred herself could lean back, with the calmness of the experienced traveler, and watch the brilliant waters, with a sunset in seeming solution within them, slipping under the queer boat—sometimes nearly slipping over it—and call her companion's attention to the ineffable beauties of bank and sky about them, for which Emma confessed herself unprepared.

"I thought China was just funny!" she declared. "You never hear tell of much besides their doing everything upside down and slinging mud at foreigners, and I never thought of their holding sunsets like other people, and about the Yang-tze-kiang being a real river, as well as a word to send children down to the foot of the spelling class with. Travel *does* enlarge your mind, in spite of the insects."

They were in the Hsin-Tan gorge as she spoke, and the "sunset like other people's" was slowly dropping into the basin of still silver and gold and jasper and malachite by turns, until it looked a liquid New Jerusalem, whose brightness did not dazzle the eyes as did

the heavens above, swimming in the fire of the consuming day. In those shimmering sheets of reflected color the lonely high-perched houses on the vine-hung cliffs seemed like fairy palaces scarcely made with hands, meeting, changing, fading, then shining clear again, as the strokes of a hundred great oars rudely broke "the vision and the dream," or the shadow of a majestic junk swept over the face of the waters. Great sheer mountains of black and gray rock leaned jealously to one another over the bosom of the separating stream, which like a thwarted giant beat its fists against them in the threatening and the thunder of the great foaming falls where so many ships go down to death.

Winifred's eyes, to which the whole stretch of the navigable Yang-tze was a repeated story, dwelt on the scene in ecstacy. Emma herself could not refuse tribute to such beauty, especially when Winifred silently gripped her hand and pointed. "My!" she sighed. "Ain't those clouds tasty? Say, is that the wash of all China spread out on the shores? It don't look clean, but I s'pose in this country they're capable of drying first and washing afterwards."

"It is sails," said Mrs. Blaize, grimly. "And the remnant of sails."

Her eyes swept the rapids ahead of them—a fuming cascade between two stretches of lake-like, almost saint-like, stillness. Through its white veil of innocence peeped evil black rocks like wicked teeth, to which anxious-eyed pilots feed so many propitiatory rice-offerings. Throw it far and wide, poor pilots! she thought. You know in your secret sinking hearts all the while

that the strength of a fraying bamboo rope on the shoulder of an exhausted man, and not the favor of river gods or demons, is to decide whether or not you with your ships shall follow your offerings into the same greedy frothing mouth. Even now a huge cargo-ship ahead of them was struggling to climb that slippery hill of foam, with the aid of more than a hundred trackers, with straining veins and bulging eyes, ranged on the shore to tow her into safety. All around them, on beach and in mid-stream, stark black wrecks of timber, fragments of spar and mast and hull, reminded them of the danger of gambling for life with Nature.

"Mrs. Blaize!" A soft voice at Winifred's elbow recalled her thoughts. "Matang has been waiting so patiently for you to read his poem. It is written, as you suggested, in the form of a journal of the day's events, and *I* think it is beautiful."

"Let us hear it, then, by all means. I did not know we had had any events, waiting here all day for our turn to be dragged up the rapids, save that the Mania attempted suicide, as usual. That is scarcely an event now. Though, to be sure, this time he tried gold-leaf, and the rest of the coolies, Lot tells me, are outraged against him for such an act of presumptuous snobbery. 'Is he a mandarin?' they said, 'that he takes such costly means of putting himself out of the world?' Don't look so moral and didactic, Emma, please; you will have nothing left for the Man-tze, who I believe have no Decalogue at all."

"This is an awful country," remarked Emma, with such conviction that her mistress flashed a sudden glance of inquiry from under her brown lashes. But she said

nothing, for Candace, with hushed voice and reverent mien, was commencing to read aloud Matang's poem.

The most impracticable of critics, even those who could be accused, like Alice in Looking-Glass country, of "being in that frame of mind that they want to deny something, and don't care what it is," could not justly withhold that title of dignity from the joint product of Matang and the anthology of "Representative English Verse." With true Chinese joy in applying a rule, he saw to it that parallel lines, indefinitely produced, should rhyme at the ends and have capital letters at the beginning; but being semi-Europeanized, he had broken away a little from the foot-binding process. It was comparatively without effort that Pegasus under his guidance struck off hoof-prints like the following:

"Day come break; what find? all well.
Stream riparian. Ladies sleep"—

"No, they didn't," interpolated Emma, in prose.

"Jolly crew, my worthy tars,
Promulgate on vasty deep.

"Come eat breakfast. Venerable
Lady of many days of birth,
Noble, antic, immensurate worth,
First use chopsticks. No like stick;
Say he make the food taste sick.

"Sinful man, such dare he have!
All men rush; he holl and scream;
Rowl and roar, and squeal them, 'Save!'
Inside gold-leaf; die he seem.

"O that thus tease Providence!
Some day this man fool too often.
Unswept, unhonored and unsnug,
To some grave he nail what coffin!"

The concluding words were scarcely out of Candace's mouth, when their blushing and agitated author, who had been seated at an approximately respectful distance from his mistress (owing to the size of the boat, it was about eight feet away), smiling, shrinking, twirling his head and turning his feet by turns, as he anxiously awaited praise, was off like a shot to the bow of the boat. A smart splash had been heard in the water; an outcry—not very great—among the crew; the little red life-boat which curvetted, safe as a cork and blithe as a cricket, on the troubled surface of the river, took a hasty dip of inquiry in the direction of the splash, then as hastily withdrew when it found that there was no boat going under, merely a stray coolie throwing himself overboard. As an emaciated face they were familiar with came up, rudely breaking into the reflection of the now fast fading sunset, Candace and Emma shrieked, Matang gesticulated, Lot swore in numerous languages, and called to the coolies quietly watching their late comrade rise and sink, "Throw him the rope!" on whose coils they were comfortably sitting.

"What use?" answered one of them, briefly. "He wantee die."

Lot grimly gave the coil a jerk which sent the sitters sprawling about amongst one another, and threw over the rope.

The man's whiter face came up the second time. He feebly put out a hand for the trailing end, missed it, and sank, while Lot ground his teeth and Emma repeated, distractedly, "It's an awful country. What's that life-boat for?"

"Wrecks," answered Winifred, tersely. She laid a

hand on Lot's arm. "Shall you or shall I?" she inquired.

"Neither, gracious madame," replied Lot, firmly. "The current is strong. I cannot risk my life to save a fool who risks his every day. I have madame to protect."

"Protect me, then," answered Winifred, making a motion to throw off her cumbrous upper drapery. She could swim, as she could do everything. "See that *I* get the rope-end." She went no further, for a splash, heavier than the first, sounded in the water, and as the haunting face, now wildly staring in the final instinctive struggle for bitter life, came in sight again, a strong arm seized the man, held him up to the coolies, who bestirred themselves slightly in the matter under fire of Winifred's commanding eyes, and Lot clambered over the side of the boat.

"It freezes the heart, that water," he grumbled—and that was all. Winifred did not praise him, as he knew she would not, and as he would not have had her do. She would not have done it, nor would he have had her do it, had she realized the terrific force of the current, like nothing so much as the roller of some mighty machine, against which he had struggled.

"Why do you keep that man?" demanded Emma, indicating the Mania, who lay gasping on a strip of matting, not heeded much by any one, save that Lot in passing pulled a knife out of his sash and threw it far into the river with an energetic arm. "Give no more trouble, heathen ape!" he demanded, sternly.

"Oh, I do not know. Because he speaks a little Tibetan, and can interpret in case I forget all I know

when I reach my destination. Or because I took him into my service, and the poor wretch is probably counting on the money it is to bring in.—What is that boat for, Lot?" as a small emissary craft from the magnificent junk anchored just ahead of them touched their side.

"An English gentleman has seen madame use her camera, and asks to borrow it. The junk is to be pulled up the rapids now, and he wants to take a photograph, if there is light enough left."

"Are you cold, little girl?" asked Winifred, drawing the shivering Candace to her. "Why, your clothes are wet with the night-damp, and it is still so clear. Come watch the junk climb up the rapids; it will soon be our turn."

Emma also shivered. Her clothes too were wet with the damp, even the matting rug on which she was sitting, and she "s'posed it must be that made her cold," she told Winifred. But no one hugged *her* up, she sombrely told herself.

Among clamor such as only a Dante could describe, and not even a Dante imagine, the huge junk was preparing for her battle with the rapids, with what seemed maddening slowness to an American, who naturally associates noise with hurry. A quiver of life and activity passed over her hitherto inert body, like a sleepy powerful jungle monster shaking his limbs as he rises. But the threatening mountain of white surf which roared its "Thou shalt not" in their ears was awake—all awake. In it was the accumulated impetus of unreckoned miles of descent from some untraced spring among the Tibetan hills.

The junk was an imposing vessel, built on the old

picturesque plan which made it seem to Emma the magnification of an ivory toy. From its stern stared the great eye without whose aid any of the crew could have demonstrated its inability to grope its way upstream and keep a wary look-out for river demons. On the roof of its highest-perched cabin had lain thick yellow coils of bamboo rope like a basking boa-constrictor; these were now dragged down, thrown to a swarm of lean filthy men from the squalid brown tents on the shore, who fought like a pack of rats about a morsel of food for the chance to strain at the rope, till there were two or three hundred of them ranged on the shore on either side, their bodies under the weight sagging, swaying frantically one upon another, toppling almost on their faces—Heaven send it be not upon their backs! They sang as they pulled—a strange mournful unmusical ululation which, taken with the surroundings of savage black crags and the clear uncanny lemon-light which lingers over open spaces after the sun has sunk, sounded like a wizard's incantation. Emma wrapped her damp garments closer about her and said something "went through her."

"Are you afraid?" asked Mrs. Blaize, quickly. "For we too must make this ascent, you know."

"I'm not the afraid kind. I'm only a little scairt, that's all, and sort of wishing I could take a few preliminary exercises on the Ferris wheel to get in training. I hope those Nancies 'll appreciate the sacrifices we're making to get to them, that's all."

"Who are the Nancies?" inquired Candace, with interest. "Are they little girls?"

"Some of them, no doubt. They are the people we

are going to visit. They are the aborigines—the Man-tze."

"The Man-tze!" cried Candace, jumping to her feet only part way, because they were too crowded for fuller demonstrations of activity. "Did you really say the Man-tze?"

"Land sakes, child, sit down! You're flapping your wet sleeve in my face. What's the matter with 'em?" and Emma rather crossly pulled her down.

"But you said the Man-tze!" with round eyes of horror seeking first Winifred's face, then the other woman's. "They are murderers! brigands! cannibals! They are not civilized like us Chinese."

"Small hurt to 'em," interrupted Emma, with conviction.

"Oh, but I know! Have you not heard?" to Mrs. Blaize. "We had a girl in the mission school whose parents had once lived in western Sze Chuan, and she would tell us tales. No one ever visits those barbarians by intention; but if he loses his way and gets into their habitations unawares, they pretend to be, oh, so hospitable! but if he eats of their food he is poisoned, for they believe all his wealth will come to them that way."

"They couldn't get mine that way," said Emma, patting her reassuringly, "for it's in an American bank they wouldn't know the way to. And they couldn't get yours, for you haven't any, and Mis' Blaize's will be all gone before she gets to them, at the rate she's spending it. So sit down."

"Listen, Candace," said her mistress. "My husband spent two months among these people, and found that

these stories were ignorant country-talk, wholly unfounded. They are a fresh, hardy, hospitable, primitive, delightful race. They do not use money, so why should they rob us? They have no morals in another sense, I grant you, but they are completely harmless."

"But how can you hope to do anything for such people?"

"To do anything for them? I don't understand you."

"To convert them, I mean?"

"My dear child, I don't want to."

Again Candace looked from face to face with those wide bewildered eyes. "Are you not a missionary?" she asked.

Mrs. Blaize shook her head. Emma turned hers away. Finally, under compulsion of that troubled, unrelaxing gaze, which plainly demanded explanation, Winifred said, gently, "I am only an explorer, Candace. What made you think I was a missionary?"

"I thought all foreign ladies were." She was still groping about for readjustment, and Emma thought to clarify the situation. "She's a Theosophist," she said, hastily. "Don't worry at her."

"Is it another sect?" asked the girl. "They taught us the names of the principal ones at the mission, and explained that God was an Episcopalian."

Again Emma rushed into the breach. "I'll tell you what Theosophy is, Candace. Our Social Culture Circle had a man down from Boston to lecture on it, and then the Congregational minister had another lecture, with lantern slides, called 'The Blavatsky Bubble Pricked,' and then the Unitarian church where I go had another man to follow 'em up with another lecture on 'It Does

Not Matter; or, Everything Reconciled.' 'Twas real fun. I went to 'em all.—Why, Theosophy is a kind of Buddhism, cleaned and repaired and set going again; and you know what Buddhism is."

Candace stiffened. "I indeed know what Buddhism is," she answered. "It drowns girl babies, and has idols of wood and stone. I have never seen you worshipping them," almost sternly, to her mistress, who felt dimly that she should apologize for the dereliction. Those accusing young eyes, with American intelligence under their almond-shaped lids, demanded a reply so peremptorily that it did not occur to her that she had a right to withhold it.

"I do not worship idols, Candace," she began. "Theosophy does not worship anything, not even God. Does that satisfy you?"

"Oh!" cried Candace, clasping her hands. "How much I have to do!"

"You'd better not do it, though," warned Emma.

Winifred had not heard either of them speak. Her eyes had kindled a little, the color risen to her brown cheek, as she continued, with animation, to the intense joy of Emma, who loved to hear her talk: "You must not think Theosophy is the same as Buddhism, or excludes Christianity. It includes all religions and is greater than all religions. It comes from what Madame Blavatsky calls 'the rootless root of all that ever was and shall be—that source of which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere.' Oh, dear, I don't suppose you can understand this, can you?"

"What is it for?" asked Candace, stonily.

"For making the world better."

"Better than Christians want to make it?"

"Better than they succeed in making it," with some bitterness. "I hate to tell you, Candace, but when you leave China you will find that all Christians are not good."

"And the Theo—what is it? they are all good? as good as they want to be?"

"Tell her about the Karma part of it," interrupted Emma, soothingly. "She can take that in, because so much of it is in the Bible. Karma is what you do, Candace, or did the last time you lived, coming back on you like a boomerang. It lays itself up against you, or writes itself down, there being no Recording Angel in the system, and when you are born again, a seemingly sinless babe, it comes up against you like the side of a house.—It's astonishing what a lot I remember out of that lecture."

"You confuse her, Emma," rebuked Mrs. Blaize, "and though you doubtless do not mean it, you are a little flippant. I'll try to tell you in as few words as possible what Theosophy is, Candace, though I don't see why you should want to know."

"Then it is not better than anything else?" Candace's eyes sparkled in the newly-discovered excitement of polemic warfare.

"Theosophy," began Mrs. Blaize, dreamily, "cultivates the spirit at the expense of the flesh. It is unique among religions in that—although, as I explained to you, it is not a religion, it merely contains all religions. Some of our Central or Secret Brotherhood gain such control of their bodies and spirits that they have been known to leave the body, remain out of it for a time, and then return to it."

"More fool they," commented Emma. "Especially if the body was in China."

"The physical body of man," went on the lecturer, more to herself than to the wide-eyed little Oriental, "rests forever suspended between the vital force within and radiations without of the deeds done in the flesh, whirled about on the wheel of Sanisara, which is life and death. Everything we do, right or wrong, sends out into the world a mysterious something—an impression, a vibration, a radiation. Sibley uses a beautiful phrase for it. He calls it 'invisible perspiration.'"

"Well, I never!" commented Emma.

"When the physical body dies," continued Winifred, with relish, "the immortal part enters a new body, with all the past and its consequences clinging to it."

"Just like teaching a dog not to steal chickens," added Emma the expositor. "Ever seen it? They tie the dead chicken round the dog's neck, and he has to go about with it all day until he's so ashamed he never does it again before the next time—at least that's *my* experience."

"I do not understand," said poor Candace, painfully. "How do you know all these things are true? Are they in a book like the Bible? The Bible is given to us in such beautiful clear print."

"They are in certain secret scriptures, Candace, only known to the Mahatmas. The Mahatmas or Adepts are a few of the Brotherhood who by ages of self-purification have become possessed of the innermost truths of Theosophy."

"Where are they?"

"They live in Tibet, in the inaccessible part of its mountains."

"They ain't done much for the country, have they?" inquired Emma.

"They must be very selfish people," chimed in Candace, sternly, "not to come out and read those scriptures to the people. Christ took the trouble to come all the way from heaven."

"I'd love to see 'em, though," added Emma, ardently. Mrs. Blaize looked at her attentively as she continued, simply, "Are you going to Tibet to hunt 'em up, if we survive the aborigines?"

"I don't think so. I told you they lived in regions inaccessible. It is really very considerate of them."

Candace's wheeling glance flashed again like a burning-glass from one to the other of them. "Does she herself believe it?" she at last asked of Emma.

"Candace," replied that lady, hastily, "young girls can be seen and not heard, though it seldom happens."

"But *you* at least are a Christian?" piteously.

"You can't understand these things, nor hope to," said Emma, hastily. "The jury's still out on that point, but the Sunday papers are taking it up now, and no doubt they'll settle it. Stop thinking so much, and watch this junk, that's having the hardest climb we've seen yet. It will be dark before it gets safely over the rapids, I'm thinking."

As Candace rose to press closer to the edge of the boat (which was not very far from its centre) her garments fairly dripped water. "That comes of rescuing the perishing," said Emma, with disapproval. "We should have made that foolish creetur mop it up after

himself and Lot.—Oh, look! it's at the crest! See it rocking like a bird, Mrs. Blaize. If that rope only holds a minute longer!"

The great ship, with its sails outspread against the now fast darkening sky, looked indeed like some splendid winged thing of mythology, rather than a prosaic nineteenth-century medium of commerce, as it apparently balanced itself on the quivering crest of the waterfall. The noise about it now increased tenfold with the excitement of the crucial moment. The beating of gongs, the firing of crackers and pistols, the shrieks of a hundred agitated men and a frantic captain; under and through it all, the weird moaning chant of the well-nigh exhausted trackers bending double; and above and through it all, the roar of the rapids—were impressive in their very volume. Emma was dimly reminded of some lines familiar to a long-forgotten childhood—

> "On cherub and on seraphim
> Right royally He rode,
> And on the wings of mighty winds
> Came rushing from abroad."

The white waters sobbed under the suction of the rocking keel, which now pressed desperately forward, now slipped back, at the mercy of the bamboo towing-line, supplemented by great iron grappling-hooks with which the men on the deck felt out for iron rings driven in the cliffs. Every eye was fixed on the sublime struggle between resistant Nature and defiant human will. The ship, with all her men huddled forward to send the balance of weight toward the smooth waters they were almost touching, had made a last violent lurch

forward into safety, when a terrible shuddering movement like the rippling of a serpent's body passed through the line of straining humans on the beach; the men fell backward, heaped one on the other, like tenpins under an expert stroke; a report louder than that of the toy pistols scattered the other noises into a startled second's silence—and then as they rose, more wild and piercing with despair than ever, the junk shot down the shining, triumphant sheet of foam into the hypocritical river that had meant to have it all along.

The women hid their eyes—but there was nothing to hide from, save the scarlet life-boat darting about on the waters like some bright dragon-fly, picking up the few, all too few fragments of human wreckage that came up. It was like a miracle: a cannon-crash of sound, some flying pieces of timber (one of them struck Winifred's cheek), a great splash of water as the lusting river leapt to its prey—and then nothing. Pale pilot, scattering rice enough to the famishing river-god to feed his own family for a year, excited *lao-pan* (ship's master) with his mouth full of orders, shrieks, curses, and prayers, deft-handed, courageous yellow sailors, inquisitive foreign passengers—the disposition of their bodies seemed as much of a mystery as that of their souls.

"Where are they?" inquired Candace, in an awed whisper.

"Pinned down by wreckage," answered Winifred, with chattering teeth. Even she had never seen a river disaster on quite such a wholesale scale. "Usually more are saved—what do you mean?" turning sharply behind her. One of her crew had touched her familiarly on the arm.

"Your seeing-box was on it," he answered, pointing, and speaking in a tone to which she—and, to tell the truth, he himself—was not accustomed.

"What of it? I have another. If that were all that was lost!" tears welling up into her eyes. "What are the men doing?" for several of them had unceremoniously scrambled over the boat's side to the stony beach to which it was tied. These stood ready to help down others, moving more awkwardly because of the store-boxes Matang was strapping to their shoulders.

Lot stepped forward to answer. "I am sorry, madame," he said, "but you must leave the boat. She is leaking—badly."

Winifred looked first at him, then at the pool of water in which she now realized they had been sitting. No wonder their garments had dripped. "Leaking?" she echoed, not in doubt, for all over its rather flat floor she could see similar little pools. "I bought this boat for seaworthy!" she cried, indignantly.

"I know, madame, but come! Who knows how fast she will fill and sink?"

"But I have been cheated!" She stamped on the wet matting, which gurgled in a sinister way. "Oh, if I had that man who sold it to me, with so many vows and recommendations and protestations! I did not trust him, but I trusted my own eyes. I have a quarter of a mind to go back and have him haled up before the yamen." Her eyes glowed.

"Was he a Buddhist?" whispered Candace, with satisfaction, in the ear of Emma, as, reluctantly persuaded of the wisdom of landing, her mistress, her eyes still glittering with the energy of anger, led the way to

the shore. Lot, thoughtful and efficient as ever, had sent a courier ahead to one of the houses on the bluff to secure a lodging for the night—"a nice, comfortable room in a clean house," he reported, jubilantly. And it was well. Tenting in the chill of the night on the cold and slippery stones of the shore, surrounded by hundreds of other tents whose occupants form the lowest human stratum in Chinese society, there would be constant menace of attack and plunder.

The room was clean and comfortable, in a comparative sense—for even Emma was becoming chastened by her travels. "Seems to me," she said, "I'll never be able, after this, to think of a self-respecting American pigsty *as* a pigsty. It'll always seem like furnished apartments."

"Why, this is luxury," said Winifred, sleepily, sinking back on a heap of not very dirty straw.

"Well, I'll own the rats are shy, compared to some. And you can dry your clothes by a fire."

They did so, and soon rolled themselves in their unsavory bed, which was also coverlet and pillows, and slept; first all three, then two of them, then only one—Winifred, whose young hardy body refused obedience to no law of health. Emma's lighter slumber was broken about midnight by a stir and sound below their window—which was a wide crack all round the four walls just where Christians put cornices. There were voices and movements, but too vague and muffled to arouse much attention, even had she not known their coolies were scattered all around on the ground about the house, sleeping on the inevitable mat, with Lot lying at the door as he always did.

But after that, the curse of fifty was upon her; she could not close her eyes, but lay staring out into a darkness eloquent of odors, until a hand reached out and touched hers, and Candace whispered, cautiously, "Emma, you are awake, are you not? I have been awake too—thinking. Emma, do you believe you could write a tract?"

"I don't know whether I could or not, but I know whether I would or not. Go to sleep, Candace, like half of an American. Mrs. Blaize is sure enough to get to somebody's heaven, if not her own, and she's kind of fond of prowling around where she don't belong."

The next morning, however, Candace rose bright and early, and woke her companions by warbling, with an air of determination, an infant-school hymn—one rather doctrinal in its composition, containing much meat for strong babes. Whatever her further plans of campaign might have been, they had no chance to mature. Winifred, stepping to the house door in haste to breathe the fresh air of heaven, saw at once by Lot's face that something was wrong. He was sitting like a sentinel on the boxes containing their food supplies. She never carried any other luggage. All around, where last night had been a crew of chattering coolies, was stillness and desertion. There were not even footprints on the sparse tufty grass or the barren slabs of rock.

"Where are our men, Lot?" she cried.

"They are gone, madame. I saw that they took nothing with them."

"But where? why? Do you mean they have deserted?"

Lot bowed. "They say that madame is unlucky, and that our expedition is fated. Does madame remember that she lent her camera to the English gentleman on the junk just before it sank? They have always been desperately afraid of those 'seeing-boxes'—"

"I know," said Winifred, now very pale.

"And they say the one she still retains will bring us all kinds of bad luck. The leak in the boat scared them still more. Then—does madame remember talking of the Man-tze yesterday? They could scarcely help but hear, in quarters so close, and those who understood English translated for the benefit of the others."

"Very kind of them, I am sure," said Winifred. "And they were afraid?"

"Exactly. They had heard tales of the cruelty of the Tu-tze of Somo—madame knows how travelers spread these things—and they positively refused to stay in her service. There was nothing to do but to pay them and let them go."

"Couldn't you stop 'em?" incredulously asked Emma, who had drawn near with Candace.

"They threatened to burn down the house about your ears," said Lot, simply. "They had begun to collect the wood."

"Candace," said Emma, in an impressive aside, "any time you hear me say anything cockahoopy about being considered a smart woman in my native town, just remind me how I wanted to leave it and come to this country. Remind me that I hankered for wildness and that kind of thing. Just do me that favor, will you?"

Half an hour later Winifred broke up her council

with Lot and came to them. "It is worse than I thought," she said. "Those malicious creatures have not only left me, but they have industriously spread reports about my being unlucky, which have resulted in a boycott. Lot says he has tried in vain to buy a boat and engage men for our upward journey, and the villagers will not sell us food. The people in the house even will not shelter us over another night."

"And we must go back," said Candace, sadly. She had found her young life no harder in one place than in another.

Mrs. Blaize stared at her. "Back? not if I have to go on foot, or build a boat with my own hands, or construct a flying-machine. I mean to explore Somo. I have my money left me—and Lot and Matang and the Mania. He, strange to say, did not desert."

"Prob'ly he knows there ain't many other folks in China owning a stomach-pump," said Emma, dryly. "What do you mean by having him and Lot and Matang left you? What are you going to do with me and Candace?" Her tones trembled.

"Don't you want to go back home?"

Emma's lips tightened convulsively for a moment, but—"I ain't the going-back kind," she said, deliberately. "But I think Candace is sort of young and delicate for such a trip. If I were you I'd leave her at a mission."

"No, no!" cried Candace, clinging to Winifred.

There is too little, instead of too much, conceit in this world. Half our sorrowful lapses come from sheer inability to understand how we are idolized and idealized. Winifred, for one, could never realize it. Her frank

hazel eyes rested with a puzzled expression on both of them. Emma, to make things more clear, leaned forward and kissed her. Candace remembered she was a slave, and kissed her fellow-servant instead. It was one of those rare moments of the soul, when it is so suffused with generous sentiments that it seems quite impossible it shall ever feel the craving of the clay again. Such a moment has always arrived when women kiss one another without compulsion.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HARDEST PART.

"Waiting, sad, dejected, weary,
Waiting for the May:
Spring goes by with wasted warnings—
Moonlit evenings, sun-bright mornings;
Summer comes, yet dark and dreary
Life still ebbs away;
Man is ever weary, weary,
Waiting for the May!"

A DINNER at the British Ambassador's was not a very serious matter at any time to any man. To Michael Traquair, Embassy attaché, hardy perennial bachelor, and general man of society, it was as much a matter of familiar routine as stamping documents. To-night the dinner was especially small, reassuringly informal, and it was diverting beyond expression to see Traquair solemnly beginning to dress for it at "one hundred and twenty minutes before seven," as a visitor said. And the way he dressed! You might think, jibed the visitor, rolling on the couch and kicking his heels on the window-pane in a tempest of mirth, that he was the Czar robing for his coronation.

"Only he would have a vallot," he remarked, aggressively pronouncing his word to rhyme with the article which in this country it is the inalienable privilege of the poor man to sell and the rich man to forfeit by non-

registration. "Or a whole slew of them. Say, Michael! you ought to have one. You're just the person. I don't believe you are man enough to be afraid of one."

"Can't afford one," said Traquair, who was brushing his hair in the inner room.

His visitor took a flying leap through the archway, seized him around the waist in an agonizing grip, and fell grotesquely on his knees:

"A boon, my liege! Take me into your service! I never, never can pass a college examination, and I suppose I'll be kept there in white dresses and blue sashes till I do. I'd a heap rather tie *your* sashes. Say, Michael! Hurry up at that hair! In another hour and a half it will be seven."

Mr. Traquair did not answer. There are remarks that are beneath notice when one has a collar-button between his lips. His caller roamed about the room, exclaiming at everything he saw, and offering as an explanation that he was an orphan, unused to good society. "Silver toilet fixings, by Jove!" he proclaimed. "And *in* a case! and every darned article in the right groove! Traquair, you were meant for an old maid."

"Very likely. But I haven't met the right one yet."

"*And* embroidery scissors!" continued Lambert. "Cut my finger-nails for me, there's a kind soul. I haven't any mamma."

"I'd rather cut your comb for you."

"Thanks, but my comb hasn't cut its teeth," deftly dodging the hair-brush, with which Traquair had at last finished. Lambert lay down again on the lounge

with his hands behind the back of his head, and whistled a tune at which he saw the other man's eyebrows raise a little, in the glass over the dressing-table. He abruptly ceased. "Can't think how you keep a place like this," he said, hurriedly.

"By paying my rent regularly," was the reply.

"I mean it's so neat."

"Can't think of anything clever to say to that. I've a necktie to arrange."

"The sun *do* move," observed Lambert, sitting up with interest, and helping himself to a cigar in a dustless case. "Candidly, I expected to see souls hurled into eternity before you got to that tie."

"I may have to hurl yours there before I tie it, and it would be awkward to meet your father at the dinner-table subsequently."

"He wouldn't miss me for a year or two unless you told him," remarked Lambert. A certain change was apparent in his voice. "Blessed are the scientific, for they don't have to know they have children. So the old man's going to the dinner. Never asked my permission. I suppose it's enough to let me sleep in the house. Mikey, take me—poor little Cinderella? Any pretty girls to be there?"

"I hope so, I am sure."

"Say, Mikey, you're not secretly married, are you?"

"Not unless it is a secret from me. Why?"

"This cigar has a wifely sort of taste, that's all. Tastes like a premium with a domestic magazine, or a ten-pound package of tea, or one of those preparations which cure the nicotine habit while you wait. Doubtless you like to keep them to give to bad little boys, too

young to smoke or be taken out to dinners by their fathers or maiden aunties."

"The thing I should best like," said his host, patiently, "would be a few minutes' invigorating silence. Next to that, I should like to have your youthful flow of spirits."

"Sold only in the original package. You refused to take me for a vallot, you remember. Just the same, I would be forgiving enough to shine your shoes, if only they ever needed it. Good Lord, Traquair, a man of my size has got to do something with his time, if his upper story won't hold lessons!"

Traquair turned to look at the "man of his size," which was six feet two. "You are nutty on that point," he said, good-naturedly. "You will get through college all right, and if not, your father won't do anything very dreadful."

"He will look at me," said Lambert, briefly. "That doesn't often happen, and when it does it shatters my nerves, which have been weak ever since I was ill. Oh, talking of illness—what's become of her?"

"Of whom?"

"The grammar of him!" sighed Lambert. "The pretty curly-haired woman. *You* know very well whom, and I know very well it's neither maid nor wife you sigh for, Mikey. It's a widow—big hazel eyes—haloey kind of hair, name something like Fire, enjoys nursing, especially a very nice patient. She went to Africa, didn't she?"

"Lambert Love!" In the short quick step to the doorway there was the trace of a military training of long ago, before young Lieutenant Traquair sold out

and turned his sober beardless face toward the goal of statesmanship, no less elusive and remote than that of army distinction. "I've given up expecting you to remember that I am more than a dozen years older than you, and that my most intimate friends call me Mr. Traquair—"

"What a comfort I must be to you!" breathed Lambert.

"I do expect you, though," continued the Scotchman, "to speak with respect of ladies in my presence. Above all, I insist that you should drop that familiar tone when speaking of a lady to whom you yourself are under considerable obligation, and who, as you have so tactfully observed, is as dear to me as she is unattainable. There are feelings even of mine which I think might be sacred even to you."

"Oh, Michael!" The six feet plus were off the sofa and in at the door with the momentum of a catapult. "I didn't mean it—it or anything! I respect and adore everybody, even my own father, and that's why I use their given or Christian names. But I'll speak of—that lady—as unfamiliarly as heart could wish in future. Forgive me up to date. Motives purest in the world, fresh every day.

"'Good old Army's come to try to do you good,
Though our methods are often quite misunderstood.
De-dum-de-dummy-de-dum-de-do—'"

He had made a dash for the brass coal-scuttle, slapped it on his head like a poke bonnet with one hand, while with the other he snatched a cape mackintosh (his own, for Traquair kept everything in wardrobes) from a hat-

tree and threw it over his shoulders, as he seized the smaller man in his arms and waltzed with him, flinging his long legs wildly about and rattling the handle of the coal-scuttle with energetic head-bobs to the time of the ditty, which he roared out at the utmost pitch of his voice:

"Le-le-le-lely-le-le-li-lo—"

"Great Heavens!" said Traquair, in astonishment. "Where did you pick up that?"

"Salvation Army. One of the fellows got up a corking parody, too. Want to hear it? I knew you wouldn't.

"'To make poor sinners as white as snow—'"

"You will make me white as snow if you keep up that racket," said the owner of the brass bonnet.—"More than you're doing for your own face. I don't mind your shaking down coal-dust on it, but I object to your embracing my dress-shirt. By Jove! I shall have to change it."

"After tying that tie for twenty minutes," said the boy, apparently to himself. He was really awed. "And it's only got a spot the size of a dime between the shoulder-blades. Do they take off their coats at dinner at the British Ambassador's, Traquair?"

His victim did not answer. A ring at the door-bell showed that his cab had arrived, and after some moments in which he demonstrated that he could dress quickly when there was need for it, he hurried away, leaving Lambert in possession.

In a moment the cab, to his surprise, was wheeled

around and driven back to his door. "Lady a-callin' you," was the driver's explanation. A window in his third-story apartments was opened, and a face coyly framed in what looked in the dusk like a veritable bonnet, leaned out: "Say, Mikey! Oh, Mr. Traquair! Can I sleep here?"

* * * * * * *

"Do you hear from your sister?" asked the Ambassador, politely, of Mrs. Van Sant.

Traquair sat half way down-table, having been given another lady to take out, less to his liking than Winifred's sister. As a slight make-weight, the lady herself would have preferred any other escort in the room to the popular and genial Scot. He leaned wistfully forward to catch Mrs. Van Sant's answer, which his companion diverted from his ears with a remark of her own:

"Are you very busy at the office in these days, Mr. Traquair?"

"Fairly," said Traquair, almost shortly. The Ambassador was replying:

"Oh, that is very unsatisfactory, is it not? You must be quite anxious."

"Some day I suppose we shall be coming here to dine with Ambassador Traquair," said the lady at his side, drowning Mrs. Van Sant's voice again.

"Do you think so?" asked Traquair, with what for him was bitterness. This woman did not like him; he even had cause to think she had injured him; at all events, she was persistently preventing him from hearing news of Winifred, and to her more than to any other human being he showed glimpses of the old Adam which forms the base of our heaviest social gold-plating.

"I do not. The foreign service grinds slowly, and seems to grind some of us exceedingly small.—There, she'll repeat that," he thought, cheerfully.

"Mrs. Blaize has really acted very inconsiderately," said Professor Love, when the ladies had left them to their nuts and wine. He was a tremendously tall man, with a heavy clean-shaven face, a monocle, and the slowest way of talking in the world. Nervous women fidgeted, short-tempered men swore under their breath, good listeners lost account of time and space, and poor ones began talking of something else to some one else, while the Professor meandered on, with that filmy, rapturous expression of the eye which betrays that the speaker is reveling in the reverberations of his own voice in his own head. All conceptions of the servant of science as a dried-up, undersized, under-fed individual in shabby clothes vanished in the presence of the father of Lambert Love. He was usually taken for a doctor of divinity, and could have impersonated a bishop.

"It was re-markably in-con-siderate," he repeated, dreamily. The lady whom Traquair, for their united sins, had been forced to take down to dinner, had said that Professor Love al-ways spoke as if he were reading from the First Prim-er. "I told her," he continued, "in the most explicit manner that if she would wait until I had completed my arrangements, I would be glad to accompany her on the entire tour. I wish to make a special study of the Lamaism of Central Asia for my book on 'The Myth of the Supreme Being.' Her knowledge of routes and places and people would have been of the greatest assistance to me. I have

noticed that those who have lived for a time apart from society come to think only of themselves."

"By the way, I left Lambert at my rooms," said Traquair, in an undertone. The other men, losing faith in the period too long postponed from the Professor's remarks, had betaken themselves in two and threes to disrespectful conversation. "He seems discouraged about the possibility of his passing the Sophomore examinations."

"Is that so?" replied the other, absent-mindedly. "I wonder if Mrs. Blaize intends to take up the subject of Lamaism at all in that book she is to write, or finish, or whatever it is. I hope not. It will be entirely unnecessary, and I shall treat it exhaustively if I get an opportunity to visit Tibet and study it. Women approach these matters so emotionally."

The idea of Winifred as an emotionalist made some demand on the restraint of the well-trained diplomatic lips under Traquair's moustache, while the idea of her at all, in any character real or imagined, sent the blood pressing about his heart with the suddenness of a finger touching the stop of an organ. Yet he had been thinking of her for nearly twelve years—this woman with the gipsy eye, who would not give the weight of one of her unconventional short curls for all he most believed in and banked on and would have fought for with stupid hereditary loyalty, and who delighted in things he did not understand any sane or civilized person putting up with.

"And the little god of this world
Sees them, laughing in his sleeve."

What sport he provided himself, in that inspired hour when he willed that a Michael Traquair should fall in love with her who was not yet Winifred Blaize!

He sought out her sister at once when the return was made to the drawing-room. "Your friend the enemy talked to me whenever you did," he said, "so I could not catch a word you said of Winifred. It was all the conversation she did favor me with. What of Winifred? You know I have not heard since your Shanghai letter."

"Nor I," reminded Mrs. Van Sant. "While I have written twice since then. The hardest part always falls on me, I sometimes think, Michael, though I never say so. How is she? oh, how *would* she be, seven thousand miles from a bath-tub and liable to die at any moment without benefit of clergy? Happy as a lark, of course, and completely in her element. She has a Chinese girl with her, adopted or bought or something, and she wants me, in case of anything happening to her, to take care of the creature and love her for her sake. She invites you to do the same. It is the only time she mentions you. I feel for you, Michael, I do indeed."

"Did you bring the letter? Ah, how nice of you, when I know you women hate to carry things in your pockets!"

"Pockets! in dinner gowns! Listen to the man!"

"I am listening," said the Honorable Mrs. Perthwayte, quickly. She had been passing,—to move out of a draught which threatened rheumatism, she said, and she suavely appropriated a share in the conversation. "I am so anxious to hear how your dear pretty eccentric sister is faring. Mr. Traquair talked to me so much at

the table that I could not hear your answers to the Ambassador. Don't make Professor Love your model, my dear young friend!—How is Mrs. Blaize? Has she established herself a kingdom on the Armenian heights, like Lady Hester Stanhope? *She* was considered insane, was she not?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Mrs. Van Sant, coldly. "Professor Love could tell you in half an hour, though. Oh, Professor," as the shadow of that majestic coming event fell across the group, "Mrs. Perthwayte wants information, and you are the only person who knows what she doesn't remember of eighteenth-century European scandals. I myself always mix up Lady Hester—what was it? oh, Prynne—with Hester of the D'Urbervilles, and I was under the impression they were both characters in fiction, anyhow."

"As a character in friction," murmured the Briton, as the Professor opened the joints of his large unctuous mouth with ponderous eagerness, and his trapped tête-a-tête looked balefully at Mrs. Van Sant over a shoulder in a sober gray crêpe shawl—"you are a success." It is only to the man in the groove of business, used to dealing chiefly with things coming in lumps and bales and hogsheads and crates, to whom the social feuds and internecine difficulties of women seem petty and incomprehensible. Those playing the game of politics, or any other on the larger field of life, where the material is human and the undertakings hinge on personality, know too well the impossibility of avoiding them.

"I fixed her, didn't I?" Mrs. Van Sant whispered back, and produced a letter on fine foreign paper, mysteriously folded and refolded until it looked like a

thumb-nail Bible, from her wonderfully fitting velvet girdle. He took the tiny thing in the middle of his palm with a gentleness which sent tears into the eyes of his sympathetic sister-in-law that would be. The criminal imbecility of some women, whom by the equal imbecility of Fate one was related to and had to love!

Traquair in the dozen years of his captivity had never received a letter from his dear Lady Disdain. He would have liked to kiss this one not written to him, but as it was, there was a pair of cynical light-blue eyes fixed on him and it, and he hastily returned it, with a faint flush on the cheek he could not lay against its satin-smooth pages, inscribed in the clear fair lady-hand which, singular to say, long sojourn among "Hottentots and Hyperboreans," as Mrs. Van Sant sometimes phrased it, had not yet corrupted.

"I have no right to read your letter," he said.

The light-blue eyes looked disappointed. Their owner was not a young woman, though others of her sex, who said they ought to know, scouted her oft-proclaimed assertion that she was seventy. "It's part of her rôle," said Hortense Van Sant, her greatest enemy.

What her rôle was, no one exactly knew, and she herself professed the simple avocation of grandmother to an apocryphal batch of babes in Wales, for whom she knit ostentatiously. She was rather a pretty old thing, said men—new and inexperienced ones—with smoothly parting, regularly rippling "chinchilla" hair (Mrs. Van Sant again) over a beautiful placid white brow. There were present that evening girls of twenty with more lines in their young faces than the Hon. Lucy Perthwayte's. The light-blue eyes were calm as Italian

lakes; the lines of the mouth were lovely; she should have sat for the frontispiece to an edition de luxe of Keble's "Christian Year" (Mrs. Van Sant once more). Soft of foot, simple of garb, guileless and appealing in manner, "Grannie," as wickedness in high places dubbed her, moved about in the best circles of diplomatic society—had moved for years of Washington residence, broken by short journeys across seas to England, leaving a prickling anxiety behind her and surrounded by a vague warning whisper that she had "influence." No one knew where or why; but whom she liked (or, rather, had not yet mortally offended) received preferment in some mysterious way by his government; and whom she did not love she chastened, not only directly with her sour-sweet tongue, but indirectly with reports (or so the smarting sufferers felt convinced) to headquarters, wherever that might be, which did not further the fortunes of the persons concerned. Her purpose in life, whence she came or whither she went on her rare departures, no one was able to guess; but there was small doubt as to where all she saw or heard went. It was charged, but never proved, that in addition to all the rest of the harm she did, she wrote for the newspapers. Such was Grannie, wistful-eyed and apparently wrapped up body and soul in Germantown yarn and Shetland wool.

"There is nothing in it which you or the whole world might not read," Mrs. Van Sant answered, concerning the letter. That she felt resentment in the matter was clear. "Though there are parts in it which might worry you, so I will say nothing about them. Winifred really seems in some ways to have no heart.

Now, you would think she would say something about being so affected at passing through the country where she buried poor Victor, and her loneliness and inability to forget him, and so on. But she doesn't."

Traquair suppressed the remark that that was not one of the facts which would worry him, and merely asked: "Where is she?"

"Oh, somewhere in the mountains between China and Tibet; how should *I* know? 'We are taking a northward course,' she says, 'and will soon arrive at Somo. That is the place which Victor did not quite reach, and will be more interesting than any other, as the people, though aborigines like those we are at present dwelling among, have their own customs and have never been fully written up. The despot of the country, the Tao-tai or Tu-tze, is rather nasty, they say'—well, I won't read you that part. 'I wish you were here—or would enjoy being here.' There she goes again! it would be so much more sensible for her to wish for you. And I'd be willing to have it so," added the self-sacrificing sister. "'The Man-tze—Emma calls them Nancies—don't know a foreigner when they see one, so you must not think of them as ill-treating me. Candace'—that's the slave girl, Michael; just think of being sister to a slave-owner!—'is trying very hard, poor child, to convert me to Christianity; I wish you could get a bunch of tracts out to her; it would make both of you so much happier.' Um—em—I won't read this; it's about a band of robbers from the Tibetan hills attacking them, and it might make you anxious. 'They have such strange antique towers in the villages in this country, and more, they say, when you get to Somo. No

one knows what they are for, as they date from prehistoric times; but they slope inward in a queer way, are entered only by high ladders, and are altogether fascinating.' Not to *me*, Michael, and she knows it! What I want to know is how she is feeling in her mind, and whether she is warm and comfortable and has dry feet, in that outlandish country. It's the hardest part that comes to me!"

"Is that all?"

"Yes, except that she enclosed some perfectly ridiculous poetry written by a half-educated coolie, when she knows I care nothing for poetry, and neither do our best people any more. Listen to the beginning. Is there any sense in this?

"'Mountain pass—'

"How could it? oh, I see now:

"'Mountain pass; sing happy never fear.
Dark derelictious forms draw near.
Tibetan him Chukpa call:
English burglar; bad men all.'

"Then there's some more about the way they were driven off:

"'Him thieve back ashamed one by one,
Where come from, white like lily, brown as a bun.'

"Did you ever hear anything so silly?"

"Mrs. Van Sant," said Traquair, musingly, for answer, "why does Mrs. Perthwayte hate me? I'm—oh, well, it sounds banal and conceited, but no one else does. And I have never offended her."

"I have, though."

"But how? and why would that touch me?"

"How? by being another woman, to start with. Then, afterward, because she found out that I could be witty too. It was as complete a surprise to me as to her, I'll readily grant you. But one can't stand everything, and that woman would provoke the silent dust. Now don't you see? Winifred is my sister, you love Winifred, I am desirous, Heaven and she both know, for you to marry her and pin her down to ordinary life. Through you, Grannie can sting me. Why do you ask? Do you think she has anything to do with your lack of promotion?"

"Think? I could swear to it—or when I think of it. They say she holds the whole Foreign Office in the hollow of her hand. And I have slaved and smiled to my uttermost, and studied sciences my chiefs never heard of, and applied for better berths, in vain. If I could get a more brilliant appointment at some foreign court, or distinguish myself in some way, Winifred might—"

"My dear boy, banish that idea from your head at once! You might put the crown of England and India in a hat-box with that of all the Russias, and send it to Winifred, and she would never trouble herself to open the box if she knew what was in it. No, you could win her heart very much more easily by going as a missionary among the cannibals—no, she cares nothing for that either—"

"Going as a cannibal among the missionaries might be more to her liking," said the man, with a depressed smile. She had told him nothing he did not really

know before, but living as he did in atmosphere of worldly aspiration, it was hard to adjust his conceptions. "But if the appointment were an Oriental one?" he persisted. "To Egypt, which she loves? or Peking, or Teheran?"

"That might make a difference," mused Mrs. Van Sant—"a chance to live in the East, away from civilization and her only sister. But who can get it for you?"

"'Grannie' might."

"And who could soften *her?* Goodness, Michael, you don't mean I could?"

"I ask a great deal, I know," he said. "And it is a forlorn hope, after all. Forget it. I was born to be a bachelor, I suppose."

Still Mrs. Van Sant sat upright, almost speechless. She was trying to realize the idea which had come to her with the force of a thunder-stroke. And at the moment, Grannie, only just released from Professor Love's exposition of the mental status of the Queen of Armenia, stopped to speak to her.

"I did not see you at my little Friday gathering last week, Mrs. Van Sant," she said, in raised tones. Now, while Grannie went everywhere, there were none who so loved her and few who so feared her as to present themselves at her "At Homes." She rightly called them small, and rightly knew how her dearest foe would writhe under the assumption that she was one of that nervous handful of conciliatory spirits with a political axe to grind.

"No," flashed Mrs. Van Sant, in reply. "Weren't you glad?"

"There, Michael!" she turned to him excitedly afterward. "I couldn't help it, nor could a saint have helped it. I did it that time, but I'll make up with her, I will indeed, if I have to go to one of those Fridays of hers and wind yarn for those beastly grandchildren, who I believe are chiefly yarn themselves. You don't know what a sacrifice it requires of all my principles, but I'll do it, for you and Winifred. I'm used to the hardest part of everything falling to me."

* * * * * * *

The fire was out in Traquair's apartments when he reached them. He did not care much, nor did he turn on the light as usual. He was in a mood when the going out of all fires and all lights in all worlds would have mattered very little to him. He leaned his head on the table, after stumbling his way to it. There are moments when men cry, and there would be more of them if a wholesome though ill-founded apprehension of the scorn of women and a grim certainty of the scorn of their fellow-men did not withhold them. Michael did not cry, but he sighed. His faint flicker of faith in Hortense's ability to win over Grannie, and in Grannie's power to influence the Foreign Office, and in his own power to make Winifred love him, had gone out almost in the moment of its kindling, and the smoke stung him. For, after all, love is a real thing, though not always an enduring thing, and its pain equally real and far more enduring.

"If I could only get on in the world, even without gaining her!" he thought, angrily, perfectly subconscious that he was trying to fool the Fates in true diplomat fashion, by issuing an ultimatum with a secret

trap-door to it. For he could not rid himself of the idea that to get on might be to get Winifred. As many a man has done before him, he restlessly reviewed his life in that comprehensive minute-glance of the marvelous human mind, wondering what mistakes he could have made, what done, what left undone, when fools were elevated above his head and he remained "a man in the position of a boy," as he said bitterly, with no salary on which to marry any woman, let alone one with a passion for travel. If she *had* married him and taken him with her to Tibet, she must have paid his expenses.

And then the foolish, irrepressible vision of himself as her husband—yes, even a husband with his expenses paid like a courier's—rose to burn on his eyes. In an instant he had tossed up all bagatelles, including the fiction of manly independence, and was alone with her on the herbless plains of the Koko-nor, or wherever she might be to-day—God grant it be somewhere in our world and not His!—under the strange blazing blue of the hard turquoise sky, a firmament indeed,—making to her the old eternal Edenic love which was before artificial social relations were. Adam did not worry about his part in the struggle for existence, or his duty to a humanity which had considerately not commenced to exist, or to a dignified line of ancestors who posed from their urns in their best moral clothes, when most probably they were but futile, struggling semi-failures like himself, with much worse manners; he did not know or care whether he was now talking of himself or Adam. *His* Eve, he knew, would waste no time naming animals, but make straight for that apple before the Creative fingers had fairly released her; and he, Michael—not the Archangel,

either—would thankfully take that or anything else from her, though it held the seeds of death. By which it may be seen that he was very low in his mind, and in much closer spiritual sympathy with Winifred than he had ever been drawn before.

For a moment the brilliant dream clasped him in arms of soothing and rocked him; then they relaxed, and he slipped back to the hard bed of reality, with its wet blankets and pillow of stone. He sighed audibly, without a thought of other ears.

"It's a shame!" called an indignant voice from the inner room.

Michael, half remembering and half forgetting whom he had left in his apartments, made a dash into the next room, to find the bed-curtains—he was actually so conservative, not to say reactionary, as to have curtains—parted, and a face, whose griminess he could not perceive in the dark, peering gravely out, framed in some sort of white ruffled hood big enough for Blunderbore's wife.

"Nourmahal, or the Pearl of the Harem," observed the owner of the face.

"Great Cæsar, boy, you gave me a start! What's that around your face? mumps?"

"They don't come out in scallops," said Lambert. "Say, I've had an awful time here. Why don't you stay at home and entertain your company? Didn't know where to turn on this triple-condemned electric light"—

"Behind the door, idiot."

"So had to sit in the dark thinking of my troubles and your sins. Upset things a little looking for the button, as you'll see. Broke your pitcher trying to wash off the coal-dust from my face. You don't mind, do

you? Got so cold had to go to bed to keep my ears from freezing. You can have the lounge."

"But what have you on your head?"

"All that ruffled stuff around your dressing-glass. I didn't think it was manly to have it there, and knew it would be becoming to me.

> 'It is the miller's daughter,
> And she has grown so dear, so de-e-e-ar—'

"yes, yes, I *will* hush. Say, Michael, it's a shame!"

"That I can't have mine own bed in mine own house? I should say so." The strength of the small well-knit arm which assisted Lambert out of it rather surprised the lank nineteen-year-old.

"Noble Arab!" he remarked, mildly.

Michael merely undressed in silence and darkness, not having the spirit to make a light.

"Say, Mikey!" called Lambert from the couch, where he had established himself without protest, being really very sleepy.

"Well?"

"It's a measly sort of substitute, I know, but—I'm awfully fond of you, old boy, if *I'm* anything. You are my father and my mother, as they say in countries I'll never see, because I've got to stay in college trying to graduate until I die of old age."

The man crossed over and looked at the boy. Then he suddenly bent down and kissed him somewhere on his face, it did not particularly matter where; and with lips (had he but known it) slightly sprinkled with coal-dust, crept to his own bed, frightfully ashamed of himself. But men too must kiss something.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN TERRA INCOGNITA.

THE pounding on the gongs was becoming unendurable, even to ears accustomed. Besides, the man on the raised seat had things he wanted to do: an unusual circumstance in Asia, but still the case. He pulled impatiently at the red robe nearest him, and whispered more impatience. The next red robe was pulled accordingly, and the next to that, with the whisper passed on until it reached the beaters of the gongs, who ceased in something of a panic. The last scarlet gown pulled was that of a personage standing with his back to the rest, pawing industriously at a revolving prayer-cylinder fastened in its frame against the wall. Bewildered by the interruption, he made a maladroit gesture.

"He turned it the wrong way!" shrieked a bystander. He too wore red, as did every person in the room save one. "It went to the left! Woe and worse luck!"

"What is that?" called the person on the high seat.

"No words were said, Tu-tze," interposed a voice, hastily, and the speaker's hand was thrust and held firmly over the mouth of the excited young lama, who ejaculated, from between the barring fingers:

"But it is wrong—the divination will be useless—it will be to our profit to repeat it. Another sheep to kill," he reminded, knowingly, as the fingers were

removed, "fresh sacrifices—fees—we would only be the richer in butter and grain."

"If he is in the mood to repeat it, yes," retorted the other, sharply, in a whisper. "If he is not, why, there are wooden collars like the Chinese for our necks, or forced labor, tilling that tribesmen's patch of his, or a cage on the mountain-side, or a dozen other punishments, besides death. And we should all get it. So be still!"

"Is our lord ready?" asked the principal lama, civilly rather than servilely. In answer to a nod he ceremoniously brought forward, with the aid of several others, a deep brazier of bronze, at whose bottom lay some ashes that smelled sickeningly through the rapidly staling clouds of incense in the air. The nostrils of their chief, accustomed to drawing in great lungfulls of the pure chill air of the mountains, retreated.

"I announce my entire respect for the divination," he said, hastily, "and my desire to hear its result. But take it a little farther away. I am not a priest, to peer over sacred things."

"Tu-tze," began the head lama in a thin and dismal but impressive whine, while a sudden stillness of attention filled the room, "we have charred with fire the shoulder-blade of a sheep, full-grown, and killed with all due ceremony, as we did upon a time before."

"There!" whispered the lama who had counseled charity for priestly blunders, to him who burned to expose them. "This is already the second time, and he does not like the smell, nor will he like the verdict. It would not be safe to do it again, for all the butter and dried grass in the world."

"And is there any change from what the ashes told before?" asked their chief.

"Tu-tze," replied the churchman, reproachfully, "I told you there would be none, when you forced us to journey here, two days' distance from the serai,—for which, however, you have liberally recompensed us. The same warning is given, even to the danger that the Golok may descend."

The man in authority looked discomposed for a moment. "Then it behooves me to be careful," he murmured. "All my people have already been bidden to be careful. As for the Golok," recovering himself almost instantly, "I knew there was danger of them, without aid of the divination, for which I nevertheless declare my entire respect. The Golok to the northwest, the Lolos and Si-fan to the south, and the Chinese to the east, threatened us before that sheep you killed was born, or even we ourselves; but since I have ruled they have not had a blade of our grass nor a hair of our heads, nor shall they."

"True, O Tu-tze!" cried the lamas, with hurriedly kindled enthusiasm, as he strode down to the doorway of the lofty-proportioned room, parting them from his pathway very much as the foot shuffles aside autumn leaves. Plainly, he was ruffled by something. At the entrance a hand was outstretched to stop him, with timid boldness. "Tu-tze," suggested this persevering individual, "we might repeat the divination, perhaps, if you are not satisfied. We could reassemble and char another shoulder-blade."

"If we do," said the chief, shortly, "it will be your shoulder-blade we char. So beware! of me as well as of the Golok."

Outside the entrance, where sounded a buzz of suppressed excitement that a lama had been thus rudely addressed, he paused. Above his head the rough strong straggling castle clambered up the mountains in steps and storeys till its crenelated summit seemed to bite into the blue, intense almost as the sun itself. Below his feet other stone houses, of smaller steps and fewer storeys, stuck tenaciously to the hillside, looking, from a distance to which he had never traveled, like odd gray warts. Below them, and still thousands of feet above the sea-level, lay green patches of cultivation. To the Tu-tze it looked very fair. He shook his hand twice; once in the direction of the Chinese, once in that of the Golok. The Lolos and the Si-fan had always worried his people more than himself. Then, rather more flabbily, with a certain narrowing of the eyes, he shook it in the direction of the castle, in which the lamas still buzzed like red flies.

"I have kept each blade of grass and each hair of each head safe from foot and finger," he repeated. "And so shall my sons after me, in spite of the divination, for which I nevertheless declare my entire respect."

* * * * * * *

People who have never felt the fascination of a map will already be thoroughly out of patience with Winifred Blaize. The spell of that glowing mosaic of symbols, comprehending in a page, indicating with a blur, a line, a dot, a patch of color, all that memory can supply or imagination suggest of human life, must appeal to some inborn instinct or else fall upon deaf ears. It is like the calling of the sea, or the artist's impulse to express; it suffuses the mind with its visions and urges

the heart with its promptings until the victim arises, like one in a trance, to set his feet in the roads his eyes have so often traveled. Perhaps he comes back a mere commonplace globe-trotter, convinced, like Emma Guthrie, of the error of his ways; perhaps he returns triumphant, laden with new maps to fascinate new eyes, to taste of the explorer's fame and participate in his vitriolic controversies; perhaps he does not return at all, perishing in Arctic snows, or dying in some swamp of the poisoned arrows of some simple savage people who have no wish to seek out the Unknown, and who slay it when it seeks them too near. It makes no difference how he ends: he begins by brooding over maps, as Winifred Blaize had done from the days when, with a huge atlas outspread on her dimpled baby-knees and griming dust into her white baby-dresses, she had made the entrancing discovery that a wiggle meant a "wiver," a string of fuzz a mountain chain, and a big blue tear-drop a lake.

Not the map of her own country, whose neat square States, looking as if they had been cut out with a cake-cutter, whose naked names, unclad in the tissue of romantic association, depressed her with their absence of appeal to the imagination, compared with such glorious mouthfuls as Mesopotamia, Scandinavia, Thermopylæ, Abyssinia, Tartary—oh, never for her leave out the R of Romance!—Arabia Felix, or even Archangel and Nova Zembla. Her fancy swam in visions called up by such deliciously, humanly significant names as Mediterranean, Finisterre, Norway, Denmark, Cape of Good Hope, the Barbary States, Lombardy, Alexandria. Here it was, labeled "The World on Mercator's Pro-

jection," a mere piece of flimsy paper she could cover with her pocket-handkerchief, and on its face, in the wonderful shorthand of dots and lines and color-splotches—Heavens! was there anything that was not recorded? She saw vividly the Creation itself,

> "When, shivering like a parchèd scroll,
> The earth and heavens together roll,"

to come out of the fire and chaos seamed with chasms, ribbed with mountain ranges, swept by mighty oceans—all there to-day, a mystic background for the pageantry of history.

At her beckoning the shadows rose and crossed the colossal stage—nations, races, individuals, language-roots, religions, inventions, legends, systems of philosophy and government; their entrances and exits, their brief lines, speaking to her charmed ear the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome; the mystery of those following ages when infantine faith and animal cruelty grappled together in the dusk of the gods, each receiving its death-wound unawares, the romance of the Crusades and the splendor of the Renaissance. How she scorned formal teachers and dull fellow-pupils for profaning this exquisite flower-garden of the imagination with the cold name of "map," and making a task of it!

This was of course when she had passed the baby-stage, and even that of enthusiastically constructing, with a finger dipped in red jam, new worlds on the tempting white surface of the marbled oil-cloth they set before her at table. Ancient maps she loved too, with their beautiful forgotten names of Armorica and Scy-

thia, Iberia and Cipango and Cathay, wide white tracts unfretted by the crowded city-dots of to-day, vast expanses where anything might happen, even to Prester John's experiences, and in fact did happen if you got too near the edge, fringed with quaint caravels standing on their heads and men and monsters without heads to stand on; while to stir the spirit of longing there were seductive legends such as "Ultima Thule," "Terra Incognita," "Country of the Hyperboreans," and their like.

Something of the gloating joy with which the child Winifred hung wistful-eyed over those mysterious inscriptions, envying an unschooled age its visions, the grown-up Winifred had transferred to Central Asia, that last outpost of the unknown. At the very bottom of the world's box, in the country of Tamerlane and Iskander, of Khans Kubla and Genghis, the blasée Pandora of civilization might find some treasures yet unfingered in those localities marked "Independent Tribes," "Khanates of the Desert," "Imperfectly Explored," or, best of all, "Conjectural Mountains." These, and one or two Arctic islands attractively labeled "Existence Doubtful," were all that remained for Winifred Blaize to see. And now, after struggles indescribable and delays unexplainable, she found herself at last in the place she had secretly, very secretly, doubted the possibility of her reaching—the mountain province of Somo, where white man's foot had seldom trod before, commonly missing it from the east and the west alike, and leaving its inhabitants in almost idyllic ignorance of any foreigner save the encroaching Chinese in the valleys.

As their party had pushed on, through mountain pass and beautifully blooming valley, along river-beds and bridle-paths, "o'er crag and torrent," leaving the comparative safety of China farther and farther behind, and coming closer and closer to the habitat of the "barbarians," her spirits had risen to the pitch of exultation. The mountain air was "so dry it crackled," Emma declared, and until they were used to it, it filled them with surplus energy, which in Winifred apparently could not be quenched by exhausting ascents that she took as easily as might Ariel himself.

She outran and outclimbed all of them, even the Alpine-bred Lot; she sang so loudly and merrily that her disapproving handmaiden always ascribed the ineffectual attack of a handful of roving brigands to that cause; she throve so amazingly, her step, never lagging, gained such additional spring, her chestnut halo of hair took on such lustre in the incredible sunlight, her hazel eyes such brilliancy of excitement, her face such an expression of fresh delight as in life and youth inexhaustible, that Emma felt dimly moved to regret that this beauty should be wasted on unwashed aborigines, two female companions, one Chinese peasant, and one middle-aged Swiss servant. The Mania had disappeared somewhere in the transit from the Yang-tze to the mountain trail, to their great relief, for, as Emma said, their stock of antidotes was getting low. All that radiance, so evidently meant to satisfy love, and love—how many thousand miles away!

"Mis' Blaize!" she began boldly, one day, and when encouraged by a "Yes?" recommenced, "I wanted to ask you, being a widow myself, not to mention a fellow-woman, and taking a sort of mother's interest in you

which may excuse my freedom— Candace, you run and pick Mis' Blaize a bouquet of those beautiful lilac-colored flowers under the rock there. Pick a good big one; we are going to talk about things a young girl can't understand."

Candace of course nestled closer under the arm of her protectress, who repeated, "Yes?"

"I'm wondering—I often wonder—you ain't made up your mind never to marry again, have you?

"There was a young man," she continued, "saw you to the train at Washington. He seemed so interested. I've thought of him so often since."

"So have I," said Winifred. "I have thought of him, in every predicament we have gotten into since we started, and tried to imagine what he would do. Emma, I couldn't! And if you, like all the people I came to Asia to escape, are going to tease me to marry him, I'll —I'll discharge you!"

She laughed, as did the maid, but her eyes were wet, her heart sore with a sudden prick. Candor was her nature's first law; she knew she had been laughing and singing—even shouting—with physical joy in life, over the deep gash in her heart through which she had once thought life would ebb away. Among these unvisited mountains, too, where he had so longed to set foot! She felt her eager spirit rising like a phœnix from the ashes of burnt hope, and would make herself no promises as to whither the wings might convey her. She had seen thirty years of human limitations, and two years of human loneliness. It is part of the inherent squalor of grief, that the longing for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a stilled voice should stealthily de-

generate into the wish for some living hand and voice to fill the void. Nevertheless—who was it, she thought, with aching indignant loyalty, they asked her to set in the place of one with whom she had walked in happy hand-in-hand through the best years of her womanhood? Michael Traquair understood her well enough; but—Victor had sympathized.

"It is impossible, Emma," she said, as pleadingly as though her maid possessed all powers and privileges of a heavy father on the stage. "Mr. Traquair is the best man in the world—"

"That settles it," interrupted Emma, with deep disappointment. "We don't marry that kind. I knew a girl in Essex who said she would rather marry the worst that ever lived, so's she'd know what she was getting.—What you staring so for, child?" rather crossly, to Candace.

"Why, I—I was just—just staring, I suppose," faltered the sixteen-year-old.

"But staring at what—dear?" asked Emma—the "dear" being a make-weight hastily thrown in to prevent another excruciating twinge of the exposed nerves belonging to a New-England conscience.

Candace, like most of us, had been brought up to speak the truth, and unlike most of us, had been denied the mitigating influence of association with the polite world. She glanced guiltily at Mrs. Blaize. "I was just wondering," she whispered, unhappily. "Do people as old as she is marry?"

"As old as she? Land sakes, child, she's only thirty-one!"

"Did you say 'only' thirty-one?" in an awed whisper that was inexpressibly funny.

Emma bridled. "I could be married myself, if I wanted," she said, with dignity. "To no less than three respectable parties."

"Not all together?" Despair of understanding the complications of foreign social systems, and uncertainty as to what latitude might be allowed brides of such unheard-of-maturity as Emma, mingled in her mind with perfectly clear recollections of the emphatic teachings of the mission. Emma grinned wickedly.

"Yes, all together, and all perfectly legal," she said, "when we get a little farther on—into Tibet. I b'lieve Mis' Blaize says they practice merry-andrew, or whatever they call the female brand of polygamy, there."

It was Winifred herself who re-opened the subject of Michael Traquair, which laid rather heavy and sore at her heart. The absent have that terrible devil's-advocate against common sense, their remembered virtues, standing in splendid isolation above their obliterated faults. "You know, Emma," she ended by saying, "there *must*, as I have so often explained to him, be perfect intellectual accord in marriage."

"First I ever heard of it," answered Emma, dryly. "They'd keep marriage certificates in museums, if 'twas so, and there wouldn't be any population to go look at 'em. I guess Adam and Eve was the only couple that ever started out abreast, and even then, one of 'em ran a little ahead. I needn't say which one.—What's the matter with Mr. Kratair's intellect? Ain't he a cultivated man?"

"Too cultivated. And I—am a savage. He has read and studied deeply along the lines of history and sociology and comparative religions and the like, and

thereby developed convictions diametrically opposite to mine—oh, he would make me the most impossible husband in the world! If there were nothing else against it, he is grandson to an English archbishop."

"Well, it ain't hereditary, is it? And I thought your Theosophy embraced all religions, so there must be somewhere you could tuck in that archbishop."

"But his creed isn't so roomy," said Winifred. "It isn't a religious so much as a social bar, for Michael himself is a Calvinist, like the forefathers the archbishop's forefathers drowned at flood-tide on the Scottish coast. But think of me as the granddaughter of an archbishop! They give garden-parties, I believe. Oh, absurd!—Talking of religions, Emma, look up over your head."

On the great cliff towering sheer above the dried channel of a small stream, obligingly opened by the prevailing drought, through which they were slowly wending their way in default of any other path, were carved crude huge characters that might have been written by the finger of Gog or Magog. The sparrow could have found her an house, the swallow a nest wherein to lay her young, in the shadowed recesses of those mighty letters. Emma gazed at the inscription with awe.

"Is it an advertisement?" she asked. "Now, what's the use of laughing that way? You are always telling me how many American things the Chinese have invented."

"I have told you far more often that we are not in China now. These men are barbarians: among natural beauties, where intelligent and Christian people provide that in contemplation of the Creator's handiwork we

shall not forget how one canned soup excelleth another in glory, the heathen in his blindness carves prayers to the unknown God. Those letters mean '*Om mani padme hum.*'"

"It's quite clear now, thank you," said Emma, whose daily speech was becoming more dry with every day's advance into the perilous unknown.

"Oh, that is the prayer of the Buddhist—and the Theosophist—and means, 'Oh, the jewel in the lotus!' Ah, Emma, I wish you could understand how happy I feel, here among these people! Just think how primitive and interesting they are, so strangely overlooked in the fortunes of war. Think of the hordes of conquering Tatars sweeping back and forth over two continents, from Manchuria to Hungary, like great devastating brooms, and yet this little unassimilated handful of mountain dwellers, as alien as gipsies, escaping the grand scattering like—"

"Like a pin slipped down in the cracks," supplied Emma. "*I* wish you was happy enough to stay here—leastwise, if you won't turn back—instead of going on to Somo village. What's the use of Somo? You've lived in the province for months now; you've taken a whole yakful, or yak's-back-full, or load, or whatever you choose to call it, of notes on the Nancies. I only hope you have mentioned that the Irish lady we're told of, who said she 'niver heard of washin' a live wan,' would be in the aristocracy here, right at the front. What is there in the capital different from any other village, except a dirty old Tu-tze?"

"Who is the only person who can give me passports to proceed," said Winifred, quietly.

"He'll pass her on far enough! He'll put her head in a cage, like those we've seen on the mountain-side hung up, that's what *he*'ll do," said Emma, bitterly, to Candace. "Not to mention our own. But we mustn't murmur. 'Brief life is here our portion, brief sorrow, short-lived care.' I'll never sing that in the Essex Sunday-school again. Now, stop staring in that hateful way you have, child. Next thing, you'll be asking if people as old as me ever cry!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE TOWER AND THE TU-TZE.

"Greatly dance, rejuvenate;
No wash baby, no wash self.
Happy people, free care's state—

("Mrs. Blaize and ladies please excuse; can't just moment find rhyme for 'self.')

"All day turn prayer-mill, heathen wight!
Mrs. Blaize forbid show them not right.
Women comely—come too quick;
Laugh and gibble—snare of St. Nick.

"No belong like China face;
Queer straight eyes like foreign friend;
Not know any other place;
Think Somo world begin and end."

THIS "suffusion," as he himself modestly termed it, from Matang's pen, adorned the first page of his mistress' voluminous collection of "Notes and Sketches of the Habits and Customs of the Man-tze." So intensely was she always able to enter into the life about her, of any kind, so fine and flexible was her spirit, that as she wrote them, encamped in the still of the evening in valleys of almost unreal beauty, with huge awkward-limbed yaks and wild-looking spearmen resting about her; or on the flat roofs of their lofty but primitively constructed dwellings, with the whir of the prayer-mill, the hum of the rude loom, the chattering voices of

youths and maidens, in her ears, the people for whom she wrote seemed to her far less real than those of whom she wrote. Where MacGregor sits is the head of the table; the centre of the universe can with unerring accuracy be located in about two minutes in ourselves. The world that wears monocles and uses electric transit and dies of appendicitis had receded from her the more completely because she had never grappled it to her soul with hooks of steel; and *the* world, the (in a few days) natural and (in a few weeks) rational one, seemed that of the shaggy tribesman driving his shaggier yak to the milking, as calmly as if it were a civilized cow and he a butternut-trousered future President.

"I never expected to ac'shally see a yak," owned Emma, with secret resentment that the sensation of astonishment should prove so perishable. "I s'pose I thought they only came on alphabet blocks to teach children the letter Y. Next thing we'll be stumbling over 'Zany' or even 'Xerxes.' We may be somewhere near his grave now, though I feel as if I was nearer my own."

The Man-tze have never been assigned their ethnological place. Too few people who know what ethnology is have come their way. When could they have covered China, Winifred wondered—this gray-eyed, blue-eyed, brown-eyed race, with straight regular Caucasian features and complexions red as the earth of Edom? this people who made no history for themselves, who crept not into other peoples' history, but must for hundreds of years have lived their obscure lives sequestered in their mountain clefts, and heard no more of Kublai Khan or Iskander than they did of Washing-

ton? There was a constant temptation to lay down the cold analyzing pencil and take them for what they were on the surface—a merry, hospitable people, incredibly simple in mind and manners, deeply religious, comfortingly barbarian. The freedom of social intercourse between the sexes delighted Emma, who was treasurer of the Suffrage Circle of Essex, almost as much as it shocked the Chinese section of Candace's soul. The young girl, with sundry sharp criticisms of her own "big-foot boldness" from heathen neighbors still chafing in her memory, wished devoutly that some of those estimable dames with their closely cherished sons could be set suddenly down in this mountain country where women came, and went, and talked, and even made love with the freedom of men. Pretty women, too—"if they were only washed," as Emma would invariably add.

To that lady, weary of sticks and stones and crowds of gaping or hostile yellow faces, the most admirable trait of the Man-tze was their lack of curiosity. Whatever opinions of them the strangers might choose to set down in their books, they had no views whatever regarding the strangers. The bronze-faced visitors dressed like themselves they merely regarded as belonging to another tribe of their own race, and paid but little attention to them, especially since these had acquired a superficial acquaintance with the guttural language they wrote, when it was written at all, in Tibetan characters. The village headmen, however, usually looked a little graver than the others, earnestly expatiated on the beauties of China and the perils of Tibetan travel, and though they ended by visêing their pass-

ports, warned them that the headman in the next settlement would refuse to do so.

"Are you Chinese, come to eat us up?" distrustfully asked one.

"Or to marry our women?" asked another, whom experience had rendered suspicious of this subtle form of conquest. Matang, the person addressed in this case, hastily shook his head, with the same expression as that with which a devout Catholic crosses himself.

"They will now sell us no more food," said Lot, returning from a conference with the headman of the last village before Somo. "They have a valid excuse in the drought. They say the Tu-tze has ordered that they store away butter and grain in those queer old towers against the day of famine, and that he will be angry if he hears of their selling any."

"He needn't hear of it," said Winifred. "I don't suppose he owns an ear-trumpet."

"He hears of everything," said the *t'ou-jen* (headman) when this suggestion was passed on to him. "The famine and the Golok are ever on the Tu-tze's mind, and he sees with double eyes any waste of food or neglect to watch the passes. Back to our great-great-grandfathers' time, no one ever used those tall towers or knew why they were built; but the Tu-tze has ordered that we store food in them, and make ladders of notched wood, so that if the Golok tribes rush down on us from Tibet, we can retreat to them for safety, with our cattle and our household goods. Do you see that patch of land so much brighter and greener than the others?" indicating a small field on the hillside, where the heads of young grain trembled in the high mountain wind.

"That is the tribal patch. It is the Tu-tze's idea. The grain raised there is sowed and tilled and garnered under the headman's own eyes, and by him divided among the families when the winter scarcity sets in. The headman must see that every man takes his turn at tilling it, and if it is neglected, the Tu-tze knows and punishes."

"Whom does he punish?" asked Winifred, with interest. "The headman, or the villager who has failed to take his turn?"

The *t'ou-jen* looked surprised. "Both," he said. "The villager he makes wear a wooden collar like the accursed Chinese, and exercise in his courtyard. The *t'ou-jen* he deposes, and puts an enemy or the son of an enemy in his place. I would not go on to Somo, if I were you."

"The dears!" said Winifred, almost affectionately, to her followers. "It is perfectly delicious, these naïve attempts to turn us back! Little they know we have food enough to take us on to L'hasa." She had been buying it,—or rather bartering for it, currency being here unknown,—merely as a prudential measure, despite Candace's earnest warning regarding poison. "I shall engage a courier at once to ride on to Somo, engage us lodging, and arrange for my interview with the Tu-tze."

* * * * * * *

The courier—a picturesquely unkempt muleteer—was waiting for them, motionless as a carved image, on the outskirts of Somo town as their caravan drew somewhat wearily in sight of the Tu-tze's castle. In after-years, that one man, whom they never saw again, stood out in bold relief from the confused mass of Man-tze

humanity moving cloudily across the memory, much as he did that day against the piercing blue of the hot noon sky. It was like an instantaneous photograph, struck flash-like on the mind by the impression that the comparatively eventless course of their journey was at last to be interrupted in some way; that their sojourn in Somo was in some way to be differentiated from their sojourn in other villages.

The village itself was not altogether like the others. Carried by magic-carpet express from New York or Paris, or even Shanghai, and set down suddenly among its huddled stone houses, crawling on all fours up the Alpine scenery, it might have seemed unspeakably squalid and depressing. Coming upon it gradually, after months of slow plodding progress through Western China, it looked positively promising. An air of prosperity pervaded the place. Tibetan traders in conical caps and high red boots, leading gaily harnessed mules by the throat-latch, walked jauntily back and forth in the market-place, driving sharp bargains with tall, handsome, free-limbed girls, whose feet knew no binding, whose hearts no coercion in choosing a mate, whose tongues no restraint of fear or prudence—who in fact, were as completely mistresses of the situation as women always are, paradoxically enough, where they do not outnumber the men.

Red lamas moved everywhere. Evidently, Somo was a trading-station of importance, a metropolis, a centre of local sweetness and light. On the highest hill, with a tower about seventy feet high, apparently in an excellent state of preservation, standing a little distance below its gates, loomed Somo Castle, its every

battlement equipped with a white prayer-flag whipped smartly by the wind, which had rent some of them to ribbons. The cunningly deceptive curved roof of China, which imparts an aspect of fairy beauty to anything in architecture, was all they could see of the porticoed entrance to the castle, for a jealous wall without loopholes surrounded the great building.

"A wall!" murmured Winifred. "How I love them! They look so resistant, and you can always get on the other side after all."

An odd look flickered on the eyelashes of the otherwise immovable statue which waited her attention.

"I must say," observed Emma, approvingly, "that's my notion of a castle, more'n those foolish things filled up with gilt furniture they rush you through in Yerrup, and you pay 'em something for taking you in."

"Instead of paying them a great deal for letting you out, as might have been the case when those castles were new," laughed Winifred. "It *has* a frowning feudal aspect, but I would not like to promise you would not find a gilt chair or a folding-bed inside. Civilization is so dreadfully pervasive! and a barbarian is capable of anything—except barbarism pure and undefiled."

"Poor things," said Emma, pityingly, "let 'em be comfortable, the same as us. They can't know people are coming to look at 'em."

"Where are our lodgings?" asked Mrs. Blaize of the image, which had been waiting Galatea-like to be roused into life. "And when will the Tu-tze receive me?"

"He said, never," was the reply, simply given.

"He will change his mind," said Winifred, cheer-

fully. "Lot, lead the yaks to the lodgings this man has secured for us."

"But I have secured you none!" cried the runner, dramatically. The joy of imparting bad news is an integral part of human nature in all times and conditions. "At every house it is the same answer. It is the trading time of year, and they are full, even the inn. You had best turn back while there is yet time to reach our village by daylight, and there you can stay where you stayed before."

"But did you tell them we were a small party?" demanded the white woman. "Three women and two men and a few yaks, all used to cramped quarters, and able to provide our own food?"

The courier answered in the affirmative.

"Then it is more than ever necessary for me to see the Tu-tze. My passport demands for me courteous reception, comfortable lodging, and safe escort on my farther journey, in every town. Did you explain these things to that old mule?" dropping into the escape-valve of English. "I mean, did you tell the venerated Tu-tze that I had papers, signed and countersigned by the Viceroy of every Chinese province I passed through, which I long to lay at his noble feet?"

"I did. I was nearly torn to pieces by dogs in the attempt to do so," with considerable feeling. "And even after I had slipped past them, the castle people would not have let me into the Tu-tze's presence, but that I was related to his servant our headman. When I delivered your message he answered that he saw no strangers, that he could not read Chinese, and that pass-

ports were no good here. He advised you to turn back, as the town was very full."

"It will be fuller by five to-night," said Winifred, briefly, with a motion of her square chin.

She dismissed the man, but to her surprise, Emma called him back.

"I just want to know," she said,—"seeing he don't receive ladies, and I d'no as I want him to,—what did he look like? what does the inside of a genu*ine* castle look like? Did he sit on a throne?"

"Or in a gilt chair?" put in Mrs. Blaize, slyly.

"And is he married?" asked Candace.

The two guardians of her youth gazed astounded from one another to her. Then they both burst into irrepressible laughter at the woman's question from one they had been regarding as wholly a child.

"I tell you," gurgled Emma, vainly feeling about among the garments of barbarism for the handkerchief of civilization, and forced to dab the tears of mirth off her cheeks with palms which would somewhat have shocked her seven small nephews, "she's comin' up and buddin' out, Candace is. I feel as s'prised as Bedlam when the ass spoke up. What did she want to know for?"

"He is not married," answered the Man-tze, "though he can have as many wives as he likes. But a divination cast by the lamas told him he would never have any more sons, so why should he take a wife?"

"Now, Candace," warned Emma, earnestly, "don't you get the notion in your young head of marryin' a Tu-tze to reform him. The Tu-tze habit is formed early, as I understand it, and can't be cured.—Why, where is Mis'

Blaize heading off? Land sakes, she ain't going to storm the castle at once, is she?" Long convinced as she had been that her mistress was mildly (not harmlessly) insane, she would have known it useless to protest, had Winifred announced that she was going to construct a battering-ram with a tree-trunk and a hairpin, and raze those forbidding walls by nightfall.

"To the tower," answered Lot, over his shoulder. "It must be habitable in some sort, she says, and we can drive our animals in by the lower door and have our headquarters there till we can make better arrangements. See! the people make no objections."

* * * * * * *

The tower wasn't much worse than other places—in China—when you once got inside it, as the boarder from Massachusetts admitted. She added that she did hope, though, that if Mis' Blaize had many errands she'd send Candace on them, being younger, and more of a favor*ite* besides. For herself, she was going to stay there until the sea came and washed her away, rather than climb up forty foot of notched log again. Before all the Nancies, too. She mustn't murmur, however; only there was a clause in her will she'd like changed, having remembered that her youngest nephew, him she'd left her silver napkin-ring to, had been given one only last Christmas by his aunt Sally on the other side of the house.

"Oh, Emma, where is your soul?" laughed Winifred, taking her by the shoulders.

"Here to-day and gone to-morrow, I'm thinking," said Emma, but less lugubriously, as Winifred gently conducted her to one of the loopholes of the tower, in

whose second storey the three women had ensconced themselves, with Matang remaining humbly below with the beasts, and Lot sleeping outside, as usual.

"There," said Mrs. Blaize, "adore and be still. You wanted romance and wildness—"

"I did, I did!" murmured her conscience-stricken follower. "Oh, just to think of it! Well, I've got 'em: standing up in a real tower—I'll keep reminding myself it's a tower and not a cellar—looking out a live loophole at a genu*ine* castle in the moonlight. Oh, land sakes! it *is* kind of worth seeing, ain't it?"

"Worth seeing!" said Winifred, who was pale with that intense delight in beauty which affects some people like a religious emotion. "Come up on the roof-top. Here's a sort of scuttle. How I should like to know what these old towers were built for! Oh, divine, divine!"

The words "pour" and "stream" and "bathe," which come glibly to the tongue in describing ordinary moonlight, grudgingly doled out by a luminary millions of miles away in trickles through city roofs and spires near the floor of the earth, seemed ridiculously inapplicable to the swimming world of light they had climbed up into, on the mountain-shoulders of the lower world. It was a Niagara of moonlight that descended on the valley, almost as overwhelming to the three humans on the tower-top as the attack of a similar volume of water-force. The great moon rolled and swam voluptuously in the silvered billows of her own radiance, like a Venus in the bath of beauty; the sharp outlines of the nearer mountains, the shadowy indications of the farther ones, spelt across the sky a story of beckoning romance in

characters the daylight sun fades out; the battlemented castle with its fantastic "prayer-rags," as the condemning Candace called them, loomed and gloomed up the hill above them, looking like some lovely dark unreal phantasy of a bewitched imagination. Out of its impossible portal beings that could not be would surely in a moment issue forth into the light that never was. The tinge of the supernatural was on the scene: the door of the Great Escape, be it by death or drug or dream or sudden spiritual exaltation, from life's aching commonplace, seemed swinging open; and they felt that the apparently idle occupations of humanity, such as moon-gazing, writing or reading poetry, being in love, or receiving a new religion into the heart, were all there was of existence.

"It is a faery scene," murmured Winifred, drawing a deep breath. "Faery spelt with the e, not the i."

"Why, does it make any difference?" anxiously asked Candace, whose education was still at the morbid stage of orthographical sensitiveness.

"Oh, all the difference in or out of the world!" her eyes sparkling. She looked like a faery thing herself. "The fairy with an 'i' is a heavy, soggy, Teutonic, bustling, almost business-like creature, with a lot of work to do among mortals. You can even think of her as keeping an office and employing a stenographer. And if you pursue her to the end, especially nowadays, you are lucky not to find her one of the cardinal virtues endowed with stage wings, like Good-Nature, or Thrift, or, worst of all, Patience. You are never sure of a fairy with an 'i.' She may not have a single idea above sweeping a room, or rewarding good little children like a Sun-

day-school superintendent, and she may be a parvenu created last week by an unbelieving hack writer to fill up a hungry space in a juvenile periodical—and his own stomach."

"Well, I never!" ejaculated Emma, who loved above all things to lead her mistress into one of her monologues.

"On the other hand," pursued Winifred, "the faery with an 'e' was created by people who believed in him. He's at least three centuries old. He's Celtic. And he isn't eternally feminine, and he has not a notion of a moral. He's tricksy, he's light-footed—he doesn't need wings—he's happy, he's the essence of romance. He smells of fernseed and lights his enchanted dancing-ring with a firefly. If he does harm it isn't in that stupid, lumbering, lame-winged way of the creature whom the smart boy of the village can circumvent, and receive the hand of some horrid princess for reward; he enchants a man with strains of weird music or a wonderful drink which makes him forget time and space and take on beautiful youth, and behold visions of which the poets can make ballads when he returns, with the enchantment still lingering on him—

'And all should cry, Beware, beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair.
  Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
  And drunk the milk of Paradise.'

"There, that is it!" rapturously smiting her hands together.

"What?" asked the other two women simultaneously,

while Candace obediently closed her eyes and waited half in faith to see faeries—with the "e."

"The poem it wanted," said Winifred, as simply as Candace herself. "The one which has been running in my head, and I could not seize it before.

> "'In Xanadu did Kublai Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree,
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran'—

"There's no river—I grant you the drought—but see how well the next part comes in:

> "'Twice five miles of fertile ground
> With walls and towers were girdled round.'

"And we have the chasm—

> "'That deep romantic chasm, which slanted
> Down the green hill, athwart a cedarn cover;
> A savage place! as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted.'"

She murmured on through the poem to its end, to the amazement of the other two, to whom she had hitherto shown only the practical side of the explorer's nature. They would have thought, had they thought about it at all, that the poetry of Coleridge was no more to her than that of Matang.

> "'And 'mid this tumult Kublai heard from far
> Ancestral voices prophesying war,'"

she finished, with tongue tenderly lingering on the luscious syllables. "Ah, Emma! I can look at a scene like this, and find such a poem, written by inspiration exactly to fit it, and people call me odd and incomprehensible

because I prefer it to their world of stocking-darning and quick-lunch tables!"

"But it ain't always moonlight," remarked Emma, dampeningly, "and it's the civilized people that write poetry about the savage places, Mr. Frapair would be the first to tell you.—Look, there's old Kublai himself, out walking on the wall. If he don't look out he will fall off into the view."

A figure, of outlines indistinguishable at that distance, had indeed suddenly appeared on the wall, and begun a slow march along its broad edge, stopping every few minutes to turn an inquiring head east or west, north or south.

"A patrol," said Candace, wisely.

"The Tu-tze," insisted Emma. "One of the villagers told Lot he never goes to bed without taking a turn on the walls to see if everything is all right. What's that red thing scudding along under the wall, just ahead?"

"A lama," answered the quick-eyed Candace.

"They're so thick about here you can't step without treading on one," remarked Emma, viciously. "Lot says there's quite a party of 'em set against him."

"Against Lot? in one day?"

"Against the Tu-tze. It's quite interesting. They want to lord it over the people more, as priests always do, and he can attend, and more'n attend, to that end of it himself, and the people seem to prefer he should do it because he don't squeeze quite so tight. They fight him on everything they dare. It appears that the Tu-tzes are really appointed by the Chinese Emperor, though it's kind of lapsed through custom into a hereditary sort of affair, and they're just watch-

ing for him to die, and maybe willing to give him a lift along to it, so's they can get the Emperor to appoint one of 'em Tu-tze. Then they could just own Somo, as the—what did Lot call him?—Dolly Lama owns Tibet."

"Talè Lama," said Winifred.

"But ain't it interesting? They say half the food sent in to him is poisoned. I shouldn't want to board with him. And if it weren't for his servants taking care, he'd be dead a dozen times over, for he doesn't bother much about anything but the Chinese or the Tibetans coming over the borders. That gets him just wild, and it's to watch for them that he prowls around the walls."

"And for us," said Winifred, dryly. "Your feudal baron has a spy-glass, Emma. See! he has it pointed directly at us."

The three beat a hasty retreat, and shut down the scuttle on the glories of the night.

"I've been thinking about that spy-glass all night," announced Emma, over their canned breakfast the next morning. "He couldn't see through these loopholes, could he? I ain't dared to do more than take down my hair, and not quite comfortable doing that. *I* think it's infamous, and the Chinese Emperor ought to know about it. A spy-glass, indeed! The heathen has no right to know there are such things."

"I have been thinking of it too," said Winifred, who was in a gale of spirits. "I think it perfectly splendid. It means that we can have as good a time and as long a stay in Somo as we want—"

"*I've* had that already," interrupted Emma.

"Studying the people, taking notes and photographs, doing wholly as we please, until the Tu-tze yields to his curiosity and sends for us. Then we get the interview and passports we want, all without lifting a finger."

"You mean he's inter*est*ed in us?"

"Surely. I shall not send Lot to present my papers at all. I shall not try to get other quarters than this tower. Here we are perfectly private and secure, and as comfortable as we can expect to be. I shall just drift till I'm ready to push on into Tibet."

"To be murdered by the Daily Lama," added Emma, reassuringly. "Oh, well, it don't matter much who does it. *I'm* in no haste to leave cards on that Tu-tze, though I'd like to pay my respects to his spy-glass with a rock. Spy-glass, indeed! and him an aborigine! and me a respectable American widow, beginning to feel like one of those doll-babies you buy ready dressed, with their clothes sewed onto and into 'em. This is an awful country!"

Winifred did not think so. On the contrary, every day of their continued stay and unresented occupation of the tower seemed to increase her satisfaction with herself and her surroundings, to lay fresh roses on her already blooming cheek, and to impart new buoyancy to her almost rollicking spirits. In truth, she was hugely pleased with the turn of events. She had reached Somo in the face of every imaginable peril and discouragement which could (but never does) daunt explorer's soul. As she merrily wrote down in her journal, she had "walked where there were no roads, waded where there were no streams,

climbed where ascent was impossible;" and—not the anti-climax it seems to the untraveled—kept her store intact.

And on reaching her goal, what had she found? An apparent ogre in an enchanted castle, who turned out to be only the usual inquisitive Oriental, with a disgusting veneer of civilization, and who after a few harmless rebuffs was letting her beautifully alone, and would end by meekly viséing her passports and assisting her to press on farther, like all his predecessors; a simple, courteous, brave and hardy mountain people, rugged as their own hillsides and wholesome as the wonderful air which filled their strong lungs and flapped their million and one prayer-pennants on the housetops, and swept height and valley clean with that strange, almost uncanny cleanness, only seen on the edge of the sea and the roof of the world. Even Emma admitted that every prospect pleased, and only man didn't wash, and even with him, it didn't make the difference you looked for.

"Oh, you are becoming hardened," said her mistress, unkindly. "Or rather, coming to assign cleanliness its proper place in the plan of the universe, instead of that idolatrous position at the right hand of God where you absurd New-Englanders have set it. For myself, I don't mind dirt any more. I try to, when I am in Washington, for my sister's sake. That is why I so seldom go to Washington. By the time you reach your native land again, you too will have become completely corrupted."

"I am afraid this corruptible will have put on incorruptible before then," retorted Emma, quickly winking

away the tears which came easily to her eyes in these days.

Winifred looked at her rather fixedly for a moment. Nostalgia was no myth to her, although she had never felt it. She had seen men, women, and animals die of it. She went without a word to the rude window-door of the tower, and ran lightly, in her short woolen kilt like a Man-tze woman's, down the notched wooden pole they used as a ladder. Near its foot she stopped abruptly, just in time to escape stepping on the soft fingers of a small person who had started on the expert monkey-like scramble up pole-stairs in which half the lives of Man-tze youngsters are spent. Winifred picked her up, and with a long strong arm swung her up several notches on her journey.

"Cheer up, Emma," she called. "Daisy is coming to see you. Heavens! what an acrobatic little creature it is!" for with a rapidity which almost made the adult head spin, the youthful visitor was already up forty feet of pole and scrambling in headforemost at the opening.

Daisy was the only inquisitive person in Somo, always excepting the Tu-tze's spy-glass. The first morning of their stay in the tower had seen her head of shaggy elf-locks, with its bright bold eyes, peering composedly in at the strangers through the window. At their coaxing advances she had run, but the next day while their backs were turned they heard a slight bounce, and, pink and panting, and prettiest through the dirt of all the pretty Man-tze children they had seen, Daisy was in the tower, looking rather proud of herself, giggling a queer noiseless giggle,

showing no signs of fear, but answering no questions, —apparently understanding none.

"Well, I never!" Emma exclaimed, when even their inquiries as to whether she would have something to eat failed of response. "You don't suppose it can be English she speaks? Maybe they've kidnapped her. She ain't a bit Chinese-looking."

"She isn't Chinese," explained Winifred, patiently, wishing for the thousandth time that Emma's thirst for culture had led her to study more ethnology and less Theosophy. "She is only shy."

"Her shyness takes queer forms," said Emma, grimly, as the little one ran gaily about, poking her small nose and supple brown fingers into everything the strangers owned, from a tin box of crackers to the camera.

"We have been adopted!" laughed Winifred, when the third and fourth visit was made by the small intruder, whom nobody seemed to own; at least, no lusty-lunged mother stood at the foot of the ladder and bawled messages of recall, as the village women were wont to do when their offspring disappeared into a neighbor's house, and none of the singularly affectionate Man-tze fathers were seen leading the little trotting figure by a finger, an every-day sight of the streets. "What shall we call her?"

"I d'no as it makes much difference what we call her," answered Emma, "seeing she don't answer. She puts me in mind of a little pupil I had when I taught country school, named Daisy—Great sakes, who's that at the window?"

A sour-looking face on slouching shoulders had suddenly darkened the window—the absent parent at last!

He paid no attention to the outlanders, but beckoned imperatively and shook an angry hand at the child. The strange part of it all was that he did not speak. As the little girl replied in signs which showed unmistakably that she did not intend to come unless forced, and the man reached an arm inside the opening and cleverly caught her, to bear her, still protesting with dramatic gestures, down the ladder and out of sight, Emma suddenly sat down on the tin cracker-box, which was too small for her, overcome with a sense of the situation. Daisy was deaf and dumb.

"And she an orphan!" commented Emma, sorrowfully. "Because I can't believe that vinegary creature's her father."

Filled with pity, Winifred tried to teach the little thing as much of the sign language as had entered into her own rather erratic education. But Daisy had no notion of learning anything; that was not what she came to the tower for. She frisked and gamboled about the place and ate the tinned delicacies they recklessly opened for her sake; she played impudent pranks on Lot and Emma, she hid things, stole things, gave them back, bestowed queer monkey-like caresses on Winifred, whom she singled out for especial attention, and altogether enjoyed herself immensely and drew their affections helplessly about her as the wee weans of this earth will; but—learn to talk with fingers and eyes? Not a bit of it; she danced in and out too suddenly, and stayed too short a time, and found too much occupation for those same eyes and fingers in the strange foreign contrivances stowed away inside that entrancing tower.

She was sitting in Candace's lap to-day when Wini-

fred re-entered the place. She had clawed the girl's black locks down into her straight-set American eyes, and was apparently trying to braid it in Man-tze style, which Emma described as "seven thousand little rat-tails with a whole department store platted into 'em." She used no comb but her sharp little nails. Emma sat back at a respectful distance, grimly interested, but fervently resolved never to touch another child till she left China. To her Winifred addressed herself.

"I have taken steps toward a move," she said. "We have stayed here quite long enough, delightful as it is, for the summer will not last forever. I have sent Lot to ask the Tu-tze to give me an interview. I thought he would be back before now."

"Oh, *men!*" said Emma, scornfully—a strictly non-committal remark she was fond of making, since there always were men somewhere doing something, and it could scarcely come amiss. She repeated it more loudly when the afternoon wore on, and the emissary did not return.

"I expect old Kublai Khan's keeping him to show him how to get the most out of a spy-glass," she said, consolingly, to her uneasy companions. "Men, you know!"

But they did not know, and that was just the trouble. Mrs. Blaize watched restlessly at the loophole window for specks issuing forth from the castle, which might be Lot. Specks came and went as they did always, but none came near their eyrie.

"Send Matang after him," proposed Emma. "Puts me in mind of the farmer's wife and the cheeses she sent to market. If you send anybody after Matang, I

trust it'll be Candace, being younger and more of a fav'*rite*, and more interested in Tu-tzes."

"Candace, call Matang," said Winifred, looking almost as worried as she felt.

"He is writing a poem," suggested Candace, in an awed voice.

"I said, call him," repeated her mistress. The coolie came, wet pen (an American fountain) in his hand, submission on his countenance. To urge preoccupation of any sort, when summoned by those to whom he owed allegiance, never entered his humble mind. Judge Chinese faith by him and his kind, and not by pig-tailed wickedness in high places, playing a "grab" game not unknown in Christendom.

"Me b'long flaid follow Lot?" he repeated, disdainfully. "Me no flaid thing. Me takee you plapers? Tu-tze man maybe b'long flaid plapers, namee Emperor on."

She gave them to him, with many an injunction of care, wishing her precaution had not withheld them from Lot. When night began to fall she wrapped a big sheepskin cloak about her shoulders, and climbed up through the roof opening to the top of the tower, whence she watched for the return of her servants. What had happened to one? what would happen to the other? what could not happen to the three women left behind, if passports, protectors, and the semi-tolerance of the Tu-tze's let-alone policy were suddenly taken from them all at once? And creeping abreast with her sickening anxiety was a perfectly absurd sense of disappointment that now she would not see the almost mythical Tu-tze who had at last successfully baffled her.

She shivered in her sheepskin. A few weeks ago, gazing at the castle, clothed in the shimmer of moonlight, she had not thought of cold. To-night there was no moon, no enchantment, unless it were an evil one, which she had herself drawn unwittingly about them in her stubborn determination to press on to Tibet after the real object of her journey was accomplished. It looked a ruined village that lay at her feet—an effect of desolation due to the lack of lights in the houses after bed-time. A blight seemed to have passed over the whole scene, which even by night was beginning to show the injury of the prolonged drought. It was *her* blight—her selfishness, her thoughtlessness, in wantonly subjecting two faithful lives to the caprice of an irresponsible semi-barbarian, savagely jealous of the intruder. Convictions like these did not often break in on Winifred's healthy self-satisfaction, the serene optimism of the complete autocrat, and she did not like them. She stood up, shook her sheepskin-shrouded shoulders, and told her fellow-watchers they must descend and try to sleep.

She did so herself, but fitfully, listening always and vainly for the soft scrape of feet on the notched ladder they had not the strength to draw up with their women's hands. The white weird premonition of light, that shudder across the black of night which it is anticipation to call dawn, opened her aching eyes as completely as the tardy sun, climbing more leisurely up the hills, could have done, and she was up on the roof again, again watching vainly, with the drowsy but devoted Candace lurching up against her. And the castle defied her like a Sphinx, a great insolent riddle in gray masonry.

"Where are your servants?" it asked. "*I'll* never tell!"

"Maybe they've accidentally eaten some of the poisoned food," suggested Candace, with the tact of youth. "Or, perhaps, being both Christians, the Tu-tze has killed them for it."

Winifred shook her head. "I cannot think so. Buddhism is a religion of love and gentleness. It teaches the preservation of life."

Candace tossed her chin. "I saw heads in cages on the mountain passes," she observed. "They were preserved, but I saw no bodies to them."

"They were those of bandits. Of course rulers must exterminate these. I have made especial inquiries, and learned that the Tu-tze punishes severely, but seldom unjustly. Some day you will learn moral perspective, Candace, and find that right and wrong are very elusive and tricky terms, forever changing clothes so as to deceive the very elect.—What is it, Emma?" as that lady's grizzled head appeared suddenly in the roof opening.

"There's a Tibetan at the foot of the ladder," she said, calmly. "Tried to climb it, but I took hold of it and joggled him off. *He's* not strong enough to be afraid of. Now he's calling and making signs for us to come down, and his voice sounds kind of familiar. Couldn't be Matang, could it?"

"Matang!" exclaimed Winifred, hurrying to the entrance. "It *is* Matang, thank—" She hesitated for a person to thank, since her views would not let her look much farther than the Tu-tze, who had not, however, restored her her other and most valued servitor.

"Where is Lot?" she called, hastening down the ladder without a thought of the reversal of the social order when a coolie beckoned and she descended. Candace and Emma followed fast on her heels. "Oh, Matang, it is good to see you safe and sound! But why did you not come sooner? Where is Lot? How could you leave the castle without our seeing you? What are you doing in those filthy Tibetan clothes?" She poured out the eager questions in Chinese, having no mind to be bewildered by the English which Matang employed to (successfully) conceal his thoughts.

"Lot is all right," said Matang, rather slowly. The three women hugged one another in relief. "He is under guard, though. I don't know whether he wears a wooden collar or not, for I did not see him. Nor do I know whether the Tu-tze will let him go or not."

"*I* know," said Winifred, her eyes snapping. "I shall go to see the Tu-tze myself." She was rather glad of the excuse.

"But you must not," said Matang, quickly. "The Tu-tze sent you a message. It was the only reason he let me go. If you leave the province he will not harm you. But you must not try to get into the castle. There will be no use in your coming or sending for the papers, for he will not give them back."

"The papers? you mean my passports? Matang! You did not let him keep them?"

"Velly solly," said the Chinese, humbly, dropping instinctively into the "pidgin" tongue with which superiors are propitiated. "Tu-tze man b'long takee, Matang not b'long give. Not could help. Velly solly." He leaned up against the pole as though tired, shifting

his position. His eyes looked as though the past night might have held little sleep for him also.

"What's this on the rock where you were standing, Matang?" asked Emma, suddenly, bending her spectacled face nearer the bare flat gray surface, where something dark and damp showed out. "Oh, there's some more of it where you moved! And on your clothes! Blood! Mis' Blaize, look, he's all dripping *blood!*"

The sinister monosyllable, whose very written characters always suggest stark horror to the sensitive human imagination, hissed out on the air like the lash of a whip. Winifred dashed upon Matang, trying to tear open the sling-like garment in which he only twisted the hidden arm tighter, warding her off with the other, while the stains came out, more bright and quick and spreading with every movement, on his coat. "Do not mind," he said, deprecatingly. "I stayed all night in a village house, and borrowed these clothes, that you might not be frightened. It had stopped bleeding till I tried to get up the ladder. It is only a hand."

"A hand!" repeated Winifred, hoarsely. It was Emma, not she, who pulled away the clinging garment with its ghastly stickiness and displayed the awful bleeding thing, black and red and raw and noisome, strangely deprived of all human semblance with the loss of that carelessly accepted member, the most marvelous of tools, the most beautiful of ornaments, savagely struck off in a moment to maim a life for all time.

"Candace, run get the doctor-chest!" cried Emma. "And the flask of cordial—and give it first to Mis' Blaize, for she looks worse than Matang."

For Winifred still stared at that terrible stump, grief and remorse choking her, strangely and basely intermingled with a certain instinctive thankfulness that it was not Lot, the Caucasian, the nearer to her of race, on whom this deed had been wrought, but only the native. This is the white man's true burden, this feeling, which he bears with him in every land where he walks as conqueror—the price, in moral coin, of the conquest. A woman of deep infrequent emotions, almost as helpless and unaccustomed as a man when they came upon her, she did not know what to do in the sickness of anger that had seized her.

"Did the Tu-tze do that?" she finally asked, pointing. Her voice rattled in her throat.

"Yes. Do not mind. I am but a coolie. I will live, and serve you with my left hand yet."

With each word leaving his lips her own grew whiter. She turned, without a motion toward the undressed wound,—she who was commonly so resourceful and practical,—with her face in the direction of Somo Castle. Stars do not blaze as did her eyes. They saw swimming seas of blood, surrounding a Tu-tze's head upon a charger.

"You ain't going to that Tu-tze!" exclaimed Emma, in alarm. "And shaking that way in every limb! Candace, you stop her; you're more of a fav'*rite*."

"Of course I am going," said Winifred, thickly. "I must kill that man. Candace, it might be well to get me my revolver. A knife I have." They had never heard her talk so. "And I must see about freeing Lot, and get my papers. Not a Man-tze headman or Chinese Viceroy will protect us without them."

"Ah, no!" cried Candace, clasping her knees. "Let me go instead. I too am only a Chinese. And I might convert the Tu-tze."

"Candace, you stay here and be a comfort to Mis' Blaize and *I'll* go in her place," interrupted Emma. "Who knows but he's just in the mood to start collecting some of those wives they say he can have?"

"Why, Emma!" with a pale smile. "Who would have dreamed—"

"Shucks!" with energy, and without a smile. "You know very well what I mean. There's lots of things perfectly safe when you've got to the stage where your face all goes in dents and streaks, and nobody knows or cares whether your hair's your own or a front. But you two are young and pretty, and he might want you."

"I am going to see the Tu-tze," repeated Winifred.

"See here." Emma firmly planted herself in her mistress' path. "You just shan't. Do you hear that? Yes," herself feeling some of the surprise with which the speechless Winifred surveyed her, "I know I'm only a servant, but I'm also old enough to be your mother, and nearly that fond of you, and I only came with you for the sake of seeing new countries, anyhow, and I say you shan't go. Venture your head under that bloody heathen's roof, indeed!"

For answer Winifred turned deliberately in the direction where the Tu-tze was to be sought. "You have gone about the wrong way to influence me," she said, quietly.

Emma knew it already, and was wringing her hands tragically, and saying, "Oh, if she'd only never come out here! if she'd only married Mr. Cratair!"

"Attend to Matang at once," called Winifred, over her shoulder, "and give him some brandy. Have you no feeling at all?"

Almost without haste, but without a minute's pause for stumbling stone or steep ascent, she moved up the mountain-path, her hazel eyes shining dark and fierce out of her white face, her limbs actuated at the same time by trembling weakness and glowing strength, the weakness and the strength of overwhelming wrath. She did not deem it worth while to analyze how much of her indignation was due to the fact that it had been her servant, an appanage of Winifred Blaize, who had been cruelly and despitefully treated. Neither did she attempt to sift out the element of strong curiosity from the impulse which urged her feet faster and faster toward the forbidden ground

It was early in the morning. The sentries, whom her observations from the tower had shown her were posted always at the gates of the wall, would be drowsy. To rap at the gates would be only to waken them. Could she scramble boy-fashion up the wall and gain the ramparts?

She tore her hands on the rough stones trying it. How well these barbarians built! The wall was thrice her height, and the Tu-tze was too clever to leave things around for an attacking party to climb up on. She wished an infuriated yak would come along and toss her over it; or even a tame one, which she would engage to infuriate. And then, as tamely and providentially as possible, one did stray in sight, like a shaggy *Deus ex machina,* — some one's docile pack-animal, with the rough cloth saddle such as Winifred had ridden; and

as easily and ingloriously as possible, she had mounted its great hairy back and made a spring—not so simple, this, for the stupid thing would not stand still—for the edge of the wall; and before the befuddled brains of the sleepy sentry nearest her had realized what it was which had landed on the broad rampart so lightly, it was running for its life along the ledge, which recalled the thrilling experience of childish days known as "walking the curbstone" beetling fully five inches over a menacing gutter. A door with a rough stone stairway leading up from the courtyard was open. She dropped into the yard, with a jolt which shook all emotions out of her for a moment, not to come back quite intact; and then, recovering breath, plunged up the stairway, through its door, into the castle, and, as it happened, immediately into the presence of the Tu-tze.

CHAPTER X.

THE DOUGLAS IN HIS HALL.

"THEN, if you are not a Man-tze woman," asked the Tu-tze, "who are you? why did you leave your home? how did you get here? why do you keep wanting me to look at papers?"

He spoke in short choppy sentences, with a certain incisive energy, and with such rapidity that it was difficult to follow his questions, especially for Winifred, who was not yet complete mistress of the language he used.

"I am a—a foreigner," she said, and then stopped, helplessly.

The Tu-tze frowned. He was a tall, large, lofty-shouldered, muscular man, heavy rather than stout; ruddy, like the rest of his countrymen, and with their merry smile and twinkling, "human-looking" eye, as Emma called it, for which Winifred somehow had not looked in their ruler. It seemed already impossible that she could have come there to kill such a man; and in fact was impossible, as he had stopped her at her very entrance over his threshold, overcoming his surprise an instant sooner than she hers, and summarily bidding a retainer who was present to see if she had weapons, and take them from her. The rude Tibetan dagger with its handle studded with cracked turquoises, her sole implement of self-defence, lay on the table

before him while he talked. When he frowned it altered his whole face.

"I hear of these foreigners," he said. "My messengers meet them when they go to Peking to carry tribute to the Throne, and every year they meet more of them. It is said that they are swallowing China as the Chinese have swallowed us—or tried to," with a gleam in his eye. "Why do they do it? The Golok, the wild Tibetans of the Koko-nor, seek to descend on us from the western mountains, because they are wandering tribes who have no place of their own, or because they suffer famine. Are these foreigners hungry? Have they not homes? Where is your home?"

"My home?"

"Yes. Where do you live, and why do you not stay there?"

Winifred looked at him rather strangely. The question was like a finger feeling for the snapped string of a violin. Not the absent chord, but the absence itself, vibrated within her, stirring faint waves of regret that the regret was not stronger. Where *was* her home? There was a tall ugly expensive heap of stone in Washington, D. C., U. S. A., where dwelt a half-sister who criticised her incomprehensible tastes with even greater frankness and disapprobation than did this chieftain of an Asian tribe. And there were houses in Shanghai and Canton—the only places, probably, of which he had ever heard—and innumerable other civilized, semi-civilized, and uncivilized cities of which he had not, where she could take up her abode for an illimitably extended time, as the loved and honored guest. And there was an ancient tower, at his very

gates, within whose yet uncrumbling walls she had spent an ideally happy month, in an atmosphere peculiarly congenial to her gipsy soul. And then—far, far away, near the half ruined temple she had not wished to revisit, and within hearing of the turbulent hissing Chin Sha, was the grave Lot and Matang had marked with a flimsy wooden cross, which must surely by now have been beaten down or hurled miles away by the fierce winds of the plateau.

On it she had once longed to lay her sun-kissed cheek as on a pillow, as she had often done on the motionless heart beneath it, separated from her now by a few inches of ice-cold clay and by the unimaginable abyss of space and thought and time which parts the worlds of life and of death. Perhaps that was, or should have been, her true home.

"I live nowhere," she answered the Tu-tze, a little wistfully. "I am a wanderer, like the tribes of the Koko-nor, but I do no harm, and I carry my own food."

"I have heard of that," remarked the Tu-tze, with interest. "The people say that you are a witch, for they sell you nothing to eat, and yet you thrive. I can scarcely believe that, though it was told me by the lamas, for whom I nevertheless declare my entire respect."

Winifred did not know exactly what to reply to this. When you are among a superstitious people, above all, when you are in their power, with your servants in their prisons and your weapons on their tables, a reputation for witchcraft may save your life. It may also forfeit it. So she deemed it wisest to make no answer.

"You asked," she said, hurriedly, "why I came to your country. I mean it no harm. I came because I like it, and am a friend to its people."

"But you had never seen it till you came," remarked the Tu-tze.

Plainly, she was not talking to Man Friday or to Caliban. She sprang for relief to the rôle of questioner. "And I came to your castle," she added, with eyes which again flashed a little, "to ask you why you injured my faithful and harmless servant. Why did you cut off his hand?"

"Why did you send him here?" inquired the Tu-tze, crisply.

The door opened while he spoke, and a head, which Winifred thought wore a red hat, was inserted, but withdrawn at the Tu-tze's peremptory, "I am occupied. Come in a few minutes again." She felt a faint disappointment, a little pique, that her long-sought interview with this rather curious character was so soon and so tamely to be concluded. The Tu-tze returned to the subject she had opened:

"I would not have hurt him had you not sent him here, when I had forbidden you entrance. Neither would I have struck off his hand had he not been obstinate. Blood and raw wounds are not pleasant to me, except when I am fighting people who want my country, and then I hear the spears clashing about me and I see red and everything is easy to me." He closed his eyes for an instant as though listening again to that wild music of Mars, and then opened them again, and Winifred noted that they were gray and shrewd. She also noted, though idly, that he

had a square chin, like her own. "My people will all tell you that I am a particularly mild and kind ruler. But I could not be disobeyed. I told him to deliver up the papers, and he refused, and clutched them tightly with that hand, and I—saw red, and had them strike it off. I myself did not want that hand. But how could I be disobeyed?"

The words had a ring familiar in Winifred's ears. She felt herself growing paler, and hoped the "little tyrant of his fields" would not ascribe it to fear, an emotion she had yet to feel.

"And will you withhold them from me in the same way?" she asked, boldly. "They are my papers, you know. If you will give them up, and release my other servant, I will leave your territory this day."

The Tu-tze eyed her keenly. Then he spoke to the silent, stolid retainer, who went to a sort of rough wooden cupboard in the corner of the barely furnished room,—a foolish lockless affair which she could herself have opened,—took down her precious papers from a shelf, and laid them before the Tu-tze, who scrutinized from four points of view the strange Chinese writing and still stranger English characters. Then he shook the documents, as though to dislodge any germs of peril. Then, instead of handing them to Winifred, he laid them down on the table, placed the dagger upon them, and frowned thoughtfully at the combination, without speaking.

Winifred, who had not been asked to seat herself, and who never transgressed Oriental etiquette, tingled with impatience. Finally he said:

"I would give you these back, if I were a foolish

man, instead of a wise and just ruler. Then you would leave my territory, but not to go back to your foreign country. Instead, you would cross the passes into Tibet by your magic, and bring down the Golok. They would settle on our beautiful hillsides we till with such care, and kill and subjugate our brave tribesmen, and marry our merry handsome Shang-Shang-ren girls, of whom there are scarcely brides enough for the Shang-Shang-ren."

"And why should I do this?" asked Winifred, astonished at this elaborate arrangement of her supposed programme. "What are the Golok to me, and why should I harm the Man-tze?"

The Tu-tze shrugged his shoulders. "How should I know? But the Chinese say all foreigners are devils, and no one can account for their actions. And the lamas once foretold to me that a woman would some day come and take away my supremacy over my people."

"But the prediction may have been at fault," said Winifred, earnestly,—before she remembered that her own creed was second cousin to his, and that she had been reserving an appeal to him as a co-religionist.

"I have sometimes thought that," answered the Tu-tze, musingly. "Oh, no, there could have been no mistake, for it cost me so much. Pounds on pounds of millet and butter, and three good sheep, that had to be killed one after another before a shoulder-blade was found with the right conformation. And three days of drum-beating and horn-blowing—such din! It was doubtless all very sacred, but my ears ached." His eyes snapped suddenly. He had the guilty, merry, confi-

dential air of one small boy confiding his delinquencies to another. Winifred smiled through her receding rage. "Then they repeated the divination, only a short time ago, and it still gave the same warning. It also said what the other oracle had said—that I need not marry, for I would have no more sons." He sighed involuntarily, then resumed, in a brisker tone, "So I keep women away, lest they tempt me, for they are very soft and pleasant. I like them, but they want their own way; and though they love their country, they can give me no advice on keeping out the Golok, which is the main thing. And they commit actions that are wrong and foolish, and before you know it you are seeing red, and must lock them up or beat them, which they never like."

"I come from a country," said Winifred, "where men never strike women."

"Never?" asked the lord of Somo, in amazement.

"Never," replied Winifred, sternly, putting into her tones that extra layer of positiveness with which we cover a shivering half-truth, unable to stand the sacred nudity of the pure article.

"They must have very good women there," observed the Tu-tze. "But even one of that kind would be scarcely worth while. If they do nothing else, they die in childbirth, and then you weep. It is not good to weep. It takes from you the strength to rule your people and keep the enemy from your borders."

"Old mountain lion!" thought Winifred, in spite of herself.

The Tu-tze struck sharply on the table with the handle of her knife. "Enter now at that door," he

called, even more sharply, "at which you have been listening."

The red cap (Winifred had been right) pushed away the woolen drapery and entered the room, with a hard shrewd face under it. The Tu-tze beckoned her to stand aside—not roughly, but then she had never before been bidden by one Oriental to stand aside for another, and had there been a mirror in the apartment she would have stared at herself. But behind the lama came creeping, then darting, another figure, whereupon the Tu-tze's face underwent an indescribable change. So did Winifred's. It was their small visitor in the tower, who had slipped in, with hands rather muddier and more scratched than usual from hillside clambering, with eyes more bold and bright and mischievous than ever, and saucy smile—on whose face had she seen that smile reproduced?

Her face underwent still a greater change, as the Tu-tze drew the child up to him in the big rude square chair which well held two.

"Thou runaway son of mine!" he said; and Winifred's conclusions underwent another jolt, which she desired vaguely but consumingly to share with Emma. It was well worth having made a mistake oneself, to see that estimable lady's expression when she should discover that her Daisy, her open protegée and secret pet, was a little boy.

"I no sooner have thee than thou art off," continued the Tu-tze, stroking the little fellow's cheek, "and I cannot find thee even with my spy-glass. Wilt thou some day wander away to Tibet and drive mules over the desert, like thy father?"

"He does not hear a word," said the lama, almost sneeringly.

The Tu-tze merely looked at him, and he hastily prostrated himself and made obeisance, with tongue out in the Tibetan fashion, which he happened to know was distasteful to his chief. "I have a matter, Tu-tze," he began—and then stopped to stare at Winifred.

There is something in the stare of an Asiatic which exhausts the resources of curiosity. Should you tell all the Recording Angel knows of you, tear your heart from your bosom and lay its inmost secrets bare, it would be but a drop in the ocean of personal information for which that frank gaze calls. For frank and unshrinking it is, to the uttermost signification of the words; it is completely like the little girl who "wasn't trying to be polite; I was trying to find out."—"Who is this woman?" he asked, suspiciously.

"A foreigner," said the Tu-tze, shortly. "Had you a matter to bring before me?"

"A trifling matter, Tu-tze, but one in which I want the aid of your word, ever just and carrying weight."

"Ever supreme," added the Tu-tze, quietly, with a flicker of the lids of the gray eyes.

"Oh, of course! ever supreme. But we know that the Tu-tze honors religion. Some time ago, Tu-tze, a tribesman of our village lost his wife. He sent, of course, to the monastery, and struck a bargain for our prayers. He was a poor man, and we made lenient terms with him. We came to the house of the dead according to agreement and performed all services. For three days we read the scriptures and revolved the prayer-wheel, never once making a mistake or turning it to the left."

"I have a long ride of inspection to take over my territory," interrupted the Tu-tze. "Can you not hasten a little?"

"Well, then, Tu-tze, after three days of scripture-reading and horn-blowing—and we blew it long and loudly and faithfully"—

"I do not doubt it," interrupted his lord, with a slight shudder, involuntarily raising his hand to his ear.

"And then, when all was finished, and a lucky day selected for carrying the corpse to the mountain-top, the insolent fellow gave us a beggarly fee of food, millet and preserved butter—butter barely three months old—and a few garments such as the poorest would not wear. And on our request for the silver head-ornaments she had owned—our invariable perquisite, as all know—he told us she had never possessed any; when all her neighbors and friends had seen her on market-days decked out in them. Would not this stir the soul of a dog? What punishment will you deal him, O Tu-tze?"

"Where is the man?" asked the Tu-tze. in his quick way.

"Outside, clamoring to see you, Tu-tze. I did not think it necessary, so I forbade the porters to admit him."

The Tu-tze frowned. It was astonishing to see the change the appearance of those two vertical lines over the nose wrought in the geometry of his face. His mouth became a half-moon with the corners pointing down instead of up. The parallel lines of his smiling lips were grimly merged into one heavy stern seam. The alert expression in his eyes was intensified into something stronger; you could scarcely tell what it was,

but Winifred had seen it in the eyes of a mastiff who was trying to make up his mind whether or not a vagrant was worth attacking. When he spoke it was not unlike the growl of the mastiff—or of civilized man when he is crossed.

"Since when have the lamas become masters of Somo Castle?" he asked. "Give my porters no more orders. Priests and women shall not rule me, nor yet defy me—How now, little restlessness? art thou tired of thy old father again?" with another instant change of countenance. For Daisy, who had been making great eyes at Winifred from the raised seat, had slipped down and was making her—his—way to the object of—its—adoration. As the foreign woman drew the small tously head under her arm with a smile, the Tu-tze rose uneasily.

"Do not harm the child," he warned, vainly beckoning to his willful offspring. "Go fetch the villager," he said to the retainer, over his shoulder.

"This man, the Tu-tze should know," remarked the lama, "is one he punished last year with the Chinese wooden collar, for shirking his share in tilling the tribesmen's patch."

"Ah, that tribesmen's patch," said the Tu-tze, smiling genially. "It was a great idea of mine. And you lamas are more than fortunate, to be kept exempt from work on it. Sometimes I think I will have to impose that duty on you also."

The ecclesiastic said nothing. "I'd like to see you try it," was, however, written very clearly in his expression.

The Tu-tze did not note it. He had been fidgeting for some moments, watching the strange pretty woman

petting his boy with outlandish demonstrations, and he suddenly stepped down from the dais to the floor, stretched out a long sinewy arm, and took the clinging and reluctant boy out of her clasp as easily and simply as the gardener's thumb removes an insect from a leaf. Then he settled back in his seat, with a sigh of relief, his boy tightly squeezed up against his arm, while the servant brought in a half whimpering, half sullen tribesman who performed abject obeisance to both chieftain and priest.

"Now," said the former, sharply. "Why do you cheat the lamas? Do you not know your soul is in their keeping? After death, when you are re-born as a pig or even baser animal, you may wish you had kept the holy men for your friends. And, above all, why do you lie to them? It is so foolish to lie, except when you are fighting the enemy, or trying to conclude an agreement with him, or when the Chinese Emperor asks if we cannot pay more tribute. Here where we are all a great family together, and I your father, it only makes confusion. Why did you do it?"

"The fee was small, I know," mumbled the culprit. "But the drought has reigned so long, as the Tu-tze is aware."

"There is a stream on the hillside to the northwest, not yet run dry," interrupted his ruler. "I discovered it myself in my rides about, and told the people of it. Why could you not bring water in vessels from it, and irrigate your crops?"

"Tu-tze, my wife was so ill," tears rising to his eyes. "I could not leave her side. She has borne me five children, and she would not loose my hand. How could I till my land?"

"But the silver head-ornaments," interposed his adversary. "You promised them, and then withheld them."

"I am still Tu-tze," reminded the judge of appeals. "I will ask all necessary questions.—Why did you withhold them, my mourning son?" to the tribesman.

"Tu-tze," fresh tears coming into his eyes, "I wished to marry another wife, and she, having had a strong fancy for those ornaments, even while my other wife was living, had made me promise—"

"While you were holding your first wife's hand and could not till your ground?" asked the Tu-tze, keenly.

The lama looked almost too happy, for the kaleidoscope of the chieftain's countenance underwent another change. "Why do you not follow your ruler's example," he asked, severely, "and have nothing to do with women? Surely no one could find them more pleasant than I. Now let the lama be witness. I will put no punishment on you this time, nor need you give up the ornaments, for the monastery is rich and you poor. But this new wife will doubtless soon die,"—he spoke cheerfully,—"probably of starvation, for you will be holding the hand of yet a third woman and neglecting to harvest your crops. Then you must pay the lamas for their prayers and services exactly twice what they asked you this time, and if you fall short of even one grain of millet, I will punish you harshly. The Tu-tze respects religion and means that all his people shall respect it. You are both dismissed, for I have a ride to take over my territory."

"I think the lama was right, do not you?" he asked of Winifred, when they were gone. He spoke simply,

but again there was in his eye the expression of audaciousness and intelligence and relish of one mischievous urchin addressing another. "But it does not do to let them have their own way always, and this will atone for some time when they did wrong in their dealings with the people and it was not brought to me."

"And now," said Winifred, quick to seize the advantage of the moment's mood, "having laid my papers at your feet," a figure of speech she hoped his inquiring spirit would not insist upon dissecting, "may I take them and go on my way, O Tu-tze?"

"Not yet," responded the Tu-tze, thoughtfully.

"But why not?" more in surprise than alarm. She had thought it all settled.

"I am not ready," said the Tu-tze. He addressed the retainer, whom Winifred was now able to recognize as the grim-faced individual who had come to the tower in search of Daisy, or whatever Daisy's true name might be. "Lead her to a large room," he said, "and mount guard before her door till you are relieved. See that food is brought her, and all respect paid, for she is a princess in her own country."

"Will you let me go to-morrow?" asked his prisoner.

"I do not know. I am not yet sure you will not lead a Golok force against me by magic."

"But I will not," she cried.

He shook his head. "The Tibetans lie," he said, "and so do the Chinese, and they are the only foreigners I know. Even my own people lie, as you have seen, so why should I trust a stranger?"

Despite considerations of common sense, Winifred felt her indomitable spirit quicken to the adventure.

Seldom, she knew, was an Oriental magnate, however petty, willing to let a traveler go without the tribute of a night's detention. The next chapter was usually a departure in state, with ceremonious escort, the bestowal of rich gifts, and the interchange of touching protestations of mutual regard. She only hoped Emma and Candace would not worry too much. There was no fear, she grimly reminded herself, that they would not know where she was.

"My knife," was all she said to the Tu-tze, with great composure. She pointed as she spoke. "It is not right that I should be held here a prisoner without a weapon of defence. How do I know that you will not cut off *my* hand?"

And then it was that the Tu-tze surprised her. To any one else it would have been more than surprise. "That is so," he replied, with the bright Man-tze smile of flashing teeth. "You may take it."

CHAPTER XI.

A BACKWARD GLANCE.

FROM her earliest youth Winifred had been haunted by an irrational longing to be a prisoner, accompanied by a fastidious shrinking from the ordinary methods of attaining that end. De Charnay tenderly brooding over his beloved flower, a valiant bit of pushing green life between the stones; Lady Jane Grey, beautiful, bewitching, but oh! so pale; the piteous little Tower princes, clinging and cowering together in the darkness of an impending doom which could not have been altogether hidden, even from the startled eyes beneath the golden curls; their brother in misfortune, the last little Dauphin of France; the stagey figure of the Man in the Iron Mask, in whom she stubbornly believed; the stout-spirited Bunyan and the pensive Cervantes, the courtly Lovelace and the villainous Villon, by the light from donjon loop-holes writing their hearts into masterpieces that carried their names farther than their free feet could ever have traveled; the brilliant assemblage of butterflies of the aristocracy who mocked at Death in the Conciergerie prisons of France; the long tragic list of brave blue-jackets over whom fierce Moors mounted guard in Barbary prisons; and other blue-clad men, nearer home, somewhat quickly forgotten in the effort of a magnanimous nation to conciliate their

jailers—men pallid and sunken-eyed, with lean jaws firmly set, working doggedly, with hands which grew weaker each day, to tunnel themselves out of the charnel horrors of Libby and Andersonville into liberty. These, and a countless following from Newgate and Tolbooth and Bastile, from the Mamertine, and even back to those dark chambers whence sighs and groans were conveyed by secret tubes into the gloating ear of the dreadful Dionysius — ravished her imagination afresh every Sunday of her childhood, with the offering of the petition, "That it may please Thee to show Thy pity upon all prisoners and captives."

Well, now she was a captive, and how did it feel? Chiefly stuffy; for in a room nearly large enough for a town-meeting, there was only one window, and that a slit in the stone, too high for her to touch its sill with her square chin, and too narrow for even her slender body to slip through. She pulled aside the brown woolen hangings from the doorless doorway. Across the straight entrance into which his shoulders exactly fitted leaned the dour-faced retainer, whose master she had heard addressing him as Kwoh. There was something discouraging in the expression of those shoulders. It intimated that they would never get tired.

"Can you tell me where my other servant, Lot, is?" she asked.

"Room like this," answered the guard, laconically. But when asked, "Is he well?" he said, "I do not know."

"How long does the Tu-tze usually keep his prisoners?" asked Winifred.

"I do not know. He takes very few. There is too

little food. Golok he kills on sight, Chinese he sends across the border to be judged, as is the law, and Shang-Shang-ren" (Winifred noticed that both he and his master ignored the semi-contemptuous title of "Man-tze," which is merely Chinese for "barbarian," in favor of the term "Shang-Shang-ren," "mountain people") "he punishes out-doors, with wooden collar or forced labor on the tribal patch, for he knows we pine within walls. When they are very bad, like bandit or rebel, he cuts off the head and hangs it on a cage on the mountain-side, that the mouth may still taste free air and the eyes look on the hills and homes of Somo. The Tu-tze is a father to his people."

"'Behold a shepherd of mankind indeed!'" quoted Winifred to herself, the corners of her mouth twitching. She took blame to herself that they did twitch, that her spirit should remain so gay and unintimidated under circumstances where a womanly woman would have had hysterics. But everything insisted on being so curious or so delightful—the castle such a strange old stronghold, built by who knows what Tatar emperor before these aborigines took possession; the Tu-tze so piquant, Daisy such a darling, the whole situation such an interesting episode for Victor's book. As Hortense was wont to observe, undoubtedly lightness of temperament went with the gipsy eye, for she could not feel frightened. She even calmly considered the subject of taking a nap on the bed, the one piece of furniture in the room—a rough bag of the inevitable brown cloth, stuffed with dried leaves, and, alas! twigs.

But her heart beat a little too violently against the turquoise-studded dagger for that. When dusk came,

and another retainer brought her food and drink, which he punctiliously tasted in her presence, she asked Kwoh for a light and writing materials. Somewhat to her surprise, they were fetched, the messenger remarking, as he pointed to the cakes of pounded millet, the morsel of cooked fowl, and the ineffable barley beer:

"The Tu-tze says that if you *are* a witch and can live without eating, to leave the food alone, for every bit counts when we know not whether or not famine is coming."

"Tell the Tu-tze," answered Winifred, sweetly, "that I consume much food, and that I have no desire to deplete his stores by remaining long in the castle."

By the flickering flame of the light they sent her—a pine torch—she commenced to write her daily chapter of events for the book which never left her thoughts for long. But the pen moved slowly over the paper, probably because it was not a pen, but a brush, such as is in constant use in the East, stiff and unmanageable from the caked paint in its bristles. Plainly, the Tu-tze's pen was not that of a ready writer. *Was* it his pen, she wondered; could he write at all? and if so, what words did he set down; what thoughts moved behind those keen eyes, in that brain unbrightened by contact with greater minds, unmolded by education, unquickened by the leaping flame of religious ardor or pure love? She paused—to muse, as she thought; in reality, it was because her hand was tired with making half-futile strokes with drying ink over the harsh Korean paper.

It flagged more and more. She was beginning to realize that she had passed a semi-sleepless night,

broken by great anxiety, culminating in a terrible shock, an exhausting paroxysm of Berserker rage, a swift panting race, and an exciting interview with the long-elusive Tu-tze. Heavy of head and faint of limb, but with more calmness than is exhibited by many a spinster who insults the seclusion of her safe country home by a fearful glance beneath the bed, she crept to her lumpy, prickly couch and slept as happily as though encamped on the open plain, with only the goat-skin walls of her own tent between her and the air of liberty and safety, securely guarded by Lot and Matang—ah, where was the one? how was the other?

She did not even dream until morning, and then it was but for a startled instant, when it seemed that she had been entrapped into the Contracting Chamber whose horror had always fascinated her youth. Its roof had fallen upon her; she could feel the crushing rafters scratch her face with their splinters; and with a terrified gasp, but with that wise presence of mind we so frequently show in the matter of terminating dreams, she woke, to find little Daisy sitting composedly on her chest, after the manner of childhood all the world over, picking open her eyes with great interest.

Kwoh darted from the doorway with what were meant for apologies. He had been standing there—who knows how long?—holding aside the drapery with one hand, and with the other resting on his sword, in an attitude distinctly menacing, ready for the instant's revenge on the foreign woman should she even breathe harm on his charge.

"I tried to keep him away," he said; "but what can one do? He hears and heeds nothing, but follows his

own will wholly. He is a little demon," with infinite affection.

"Has sh—has he no nurse?" asked the woman, pity surging up within her for the small unmothered scrap of humanity, who could only gaze out at child-life through an impassable barrier of affliction. The little fellow himself, in complete ignorance of anything pathetic in his lot, had clambered down as she rose to her feet, and was now having a glorious time disemboweling the bed, whose stuffing he scattered to the four corners of the room.

"Stop, stop," ordered Kwoh, shaking his head earnestly. "Thou makest work for Kwoh. Oh, would that he could hear!—No, he has no woman to care for him. The Tu-tze does not want them in the castle, nor do the lamas, and it is best that he should grow up a man among men, though of course he could never rule the Shang-Shang-ren." He sighed.

"The Tu-tze commands you to come to him," he added, "as soon as you have eaten. The food is there," pointing to the floor.

"The Tu-tze?" Winifred's heart leaped. "I will not keep him waiting," she hurriedly said, the heart in her throat choking her. "I want no food."

The Tu-tze was waiting for her in the great hall, where a chair was placed for her this time. Before him, outspread again on the table, were her precious papers.

"You may take them," said that adorable Tu-tze, mildly, following her eyes' hungry glance, "since you appear to value them so."

Winifred could scarcely believe her ears, scarcely the

evidence of touch when he passed them to her, with a smile which was positively winning. What teeth he had!

"Foreigners must be very strange," he continued, musingly, "to think so much of a bit of paper *I* cannot read. There is something else,—I cannot understand it. I lost sleep last night thinking of it, though I had a long ride and an early one to take about my territory this morning, which is already over."

Winifred could not help but envy that magnificent margin of strength, that rich reserve of vitality, which could lose sleep and rise and ride early, without impairing the red of the cheek and the light of the eye and that furnace-glow of vigor in the great active body, which actually passed out to others about him like an impalpable radiation of energy. It is the inexorable difference between a strong man and a strong woman that he can possess such a margin and she cannot.

"I cannot understand it," he repeated. "Not only why you came here, but how you came here, when I had taken every pains to prevent you. Did not the headmen of the villages tell you there was no food, the passes were dangerous and the bandits many?"

"They did," said Winifred, smiling. "But I am like you, O Tu-tze! and like not to be baffled. So I pressed on."

"But I took so many steps," complained the Tu-tze, frowning a little. "That man I commissioned to block your progress—he sent me word by a traveling trader that he had prepared all the villages to give you a hostile reception. I thought you would surely never reach here."

"A man you sent to block my progress?" repeated Winifred, greatly puzzled. "I did not know it. How did you hear that I was coming?"

"Through a pilgrim. How does all news travel? A priest at an old temple in western Sze-Chuan told one of my people, returning from Pekin in the train of him I sent there with annual tribute"—there was something unanalyzable in the accent with which the Tu-tze pronounced that word "tribute," as though it tasted nauseous in his mouth—"that a woman was coming to my country; that she would draw strange lines of black and white and ask the people many questions and write down a spell against the Shang-Shang-ren. 'A woman with yellow eyes,' he said, 'with which she transfixes men and makes them do her will. She is a devil and fears nothing.' So thenceforth I watched for you as carefully as for the Golok, sending a man into China to gather news about you and to do what he could against you. I thought," and he looked aggrieved, "it was all ended when he conveyed me word that he had scuttled your boat on the Yang-tze—"

"*The Mania!*" cried Winifred. Her yellow eyes dilated. "Stop, while I get the thoughts in my head cleared. It was not an accident, then, that leak in the boat! and the dive in the water that I thought meant suicide—I see it all now. He gashed its bottom." She struck her hands together again and again at the thought that she had been tricked by a wretched coolie, acting in co-operation with an apparently simple barbarian, whom she had not dreamed capable of such far-reaching schemes to attain so paltry an end. But that was Asia, all over, she told herself,

grimly. And it was sweet to think she had baffled them.

"But why did you take such pains to keep me out?" she asked, still trying to realize that no network of mere accidents had enmeshed her. "Oh, I see that too. You feared fulfillment of the prophecy that a woman would come and take your supremacy from you. But do you not believe it possible that you were deceived in the divination?"

"I have been thinking of that very thing all night," replied the Tu-tze, "and it is of it I wish to speak. The lamas *could* deceive me, could they not? for I know nothing about charred shoulder-blades of sheep save that they smell atrociously. And their gain in telling me an untrue tale would be that I would fear to marry, lest my wife kill me and make herself Tu-tze in my place, which is not against our customs. And if I do not take a wife, I have no more sons, and failing sons of mine, they could petition the Emperor of China to appoint one of themselves to rule, even as the Talè Lama rules Tibet—or, as some say, his advisers rule the Talè Lama. Is it not so?"

"It is easily so," answered Winifred, eagerly. With impatient eye she had been marking the ascent of the free sun in the open sky while they talked away time. "The whole prophecy is probably a deceit, O Tu-tze, in which evil spirits, if any, had a hand, and therefore I could and would do you no possible harm, and will leave your territory this day, with my following." She made a low, significant obeisance.

"It was about that too that I wished to speak to you," said the Tu-tze, quickly. "The prophecy being

probably false, as you say, there is no peril in my marrying, and no reason left why I should not take you for my wife, if it is for that that you sought me out. In fact, I should like it very much."

He smiled attractively, and folded his hands in a way which suggested supreme self-gratulation at having satisfactorily solved a knotty problem.

He smiled and folded amid an absolute silence. Winifred's eyes spoke, as they moved distractedly about the room, from guarded door to tiny window, then back to the still genially smiling Tu-tze. The papers rustled against her heart more loudly than ever, as it beat with the force of Thor's hammer. But she was completely unable to speak. Something had been said that had knocked the breath out of her, but her mind slipped away from the attempt to grasp what it was. All she knew was that everything green and growing in the world—the tops of the tall trees on the mountain-sides below, the exquisite verdure of the thousand meadows of the hundred lands she had traversed with unfettered feet, even the geranium-leaves in Hortense's window-garden, the one pretty thing about the ugly Washington mansion—seemed very far away. Because—oh, because she was to be taken back to some sort of dark place for some sort of dark reason—ah, here it was, now clearing itself out of the cloud of her mind: this ridiculous, this absolutely humorous old Tu-tze wanted to marry Winifred Blaize.

"No, no," she finally gasped, inadequately.

"But why not?" The Tu-tze's expression of amazement copied her own.

Twice Winifred's dry lips opened—and twice closed.

That question was patently its own answer. To any one who could ask "Why not?" there was neither "Why" nor "Not." There was nothing to do but laugh, if one could summon courage, as she knew she could, and escape if—oh, one *must!*

"I thought you would be pleased," said the Tu-tze. The big expressive mouth had taken on savage disappointed lines. His voice had a growl in it like that of the shaggy Tibetan dogs outside. "I have been thinking of it all night, save when I went out to reconnoitre the walls. It will be a wise action in every way. I—I have not seen a woman like you before. You are fully worthy to become the wife of a Tu-tze. And the others of your train—there is an old woman and a young one, is there not? I might send for them also and look at them, though," doubtfully, "so many wives are foolishness for a man, especially when famine threatens. I found one more than enough before. Still, I might send for them and see what they are like. Would you advise it?" rather anxiously.

"No, no!" cried Winifred again. She desperately dragged herself by sheer will-force out of the daze into which contemplation of her own danger had thrown her, to protect her companions from also falling into the pit she had digged herself. One was a hated Chinese, she told him; the other was old. "And they have both such tempers, Tu-tze!" she urged, feverishly, inwardly thanking Fate that she herself had been born outside the New-England-conscience belt. "You would never have your own way. You do not want women with such evil dispositions."

"That is so," said the Tu-tze, thoughtfully. "After

all, I want no woman but you. *Your* disposition is not evil, I know; your face and hands and actions are too gentle."

At the moment, Winifred's hand, which she had thrust within her robe, was uncertainly feeling the turquoise-hilted knife. No, not yet; the Tu-tze was too strong, and her spirit, still too civilized, shrank from justifiable murder in the most unjustifiable manner. Instead—

"Tu-tze," she said, very slowly and clearly, with her cold hands crushing one another in a nervously tightening clasp, "I will tell you the reason I cannot marry you." A hundred valid ones had risen glibly to her lips, to be despairingly rejected. In one point only could they meet on Man-tze ground. "I do not love you. The humblest of your subjects, Tu-tze; the youngest, weakest, most foolish girl, is allowed to choose her lover. My heart reveres and exalts you, Tu-tze, as the wisest and noblest of rulers, as the greatest of patriots, but it does not choose you. It chooses the men of my own country instead."

Ah! would that it had done so sooner!

"That is a bad thing," said the Tu-tze. "For I mean to make you my wife, and you would be happier if you loved me as I merit. I am quite resolved. I have not heard a woman talk like you."

"You would never have your own way!" Winifred flashed out, furious at the sob in her voice.

"Oh, yes," said the Tu-tze, "I would have it. And if you had yours sometimes, it would do little harm. You could give me much advice as to how to keep my territory from being swallowed up. And besides, I like

you. You may go now, for I have things to do. Every month my headmen from all the hamlets meet here with reports on the condition and government of their villages. I shall ask them why they did not keep you out," and a gleam of amusement showed on his face like light through a crack. Then all was stern again. "We will talk over this matter further. And in the meantime, you had better let your mind dwell as affectionately on me as possible, for you will be happier so."

"And in the meantime," said Winifred, with a manner which made him look at her with sudden attention, "you had better remember that I come from a country where men obey women, and lay no finger on them without their permission, and never lock them up. Furthermore," with a final elastic bound to the opposite pole of the New-England conscience, "I am under the special protection of spirits, and of the great Mahatmas of your religion, which is also mine, who will punish any indignity offered me."

"I scarcely believe that," responded the Tu-tze, bluntly, and Winifred's eyes drooped. Again she remembered she was not reasoning with Man Friday. "The lamas, whom I nevertheless greatly respect, tell us, I think, of a few more spirits than there are. And if they protected you, they would not have led you into my castle to be imprisoned. But we will talk of this when I have not to meet my headmen. Kwoh, guard her door as before."

"For once in your life, Winifred Blaize"—commenced the captive, aloud, dropping down somewhat weakly on the one article of furniture in the spacious prison to

which Kwoh led her back again. She was sitting with elbows on knees, her square chin sunk in her not altogether steady hands. "For once in your life, daughter Winifred," she repeated, "you have received more than you bargained for."

Then her chin sank in her hands again, and she summoned all her faith and her practical wisdom to a conference of powers on the possibility of communicating, by Mahatma telegraph or otherwise, with Michael Traquair.

* * * * * * *

Kwoh guarded her door by day, and another man, apparently as incorruptible and certainly as well armed, by night. And they had taken her dagger from her this time—a sensible move, she herself felt, for she had intended scraping at the window opening till it was large enough to slip through, tearing into strips the bag that made her bed, and attempting escape that way. Also, her request for a Man-tze woman to attend her was denied, for reasons which reflected credit on the Tu-tze's perspicacity. "You would win her with your yellow eyes," he said, "and make her help you get away."

His advancement of the same objections against her communicating with the undoubtedly terrified Candace and Emma was a severer blow than she dared admit to herself. She wanted to send them a letter, being no more anxious than the Tu-tze himself to bring them near the castle. True, he frankly stated his aversion to taking more than one wife; but the sight of Candace's youth and freshness might work the same swift and fatal change in his convictions as had her own yellow eyes. But her soul sickened in her at the

thought of their terror, their helplessness—for Matang had now but one hand with which to defend them; their inability to get away. Or had they gotten away? and was she herself left absolutely alone in her self-set snare, with the Tu-tze's hand, unaccustomed to be denied, creeping closer every day?

Her captor would not tell her, any more than he would tell her where Lot was. So one day—her captivity, of which she kept count by her watch, being about ten days old—she turned on him. She would teach him what tempers foreign women had, and see if that could cure this absurd infatuation.

"You ask me every day why I do not love you yet," she said, hotly. "I will tell you, and you may kill me if you like, or marry me, and then I will kill myself, and my spirit will work you malignity forever, whether you believe it or not. It is because you are a harsh and cruel man, without heart or mercy, an oppressor of the weak, even as the Emperor of China himself."

"I harsh?" repeated the Tu-tze, quickly. "I am the mildest and most clement of rulers, as every man of the Shang-Shang-ren knows. It would go hard with him if he dared know anything else. Are you still thinking of that servant's hand? I did not really mean that; it was in a hasty moment."

"You cut off the hand of a poor man who had never harmed you," said Winifred, sternly. "You imprisoned and seek to seize for your wife a woman who does not like you, and whose heart longs for the men of her own country," as indeed it had done, during the past days. "And you will not even tell her whether her faithful servants are alive and safe.

Therefore I scorn you, Tu-tze. Were you ever scorned by a woman before? In my country that stings men's hearts till they die, or sometimes kill themselves"—for that had suddenly occurred to her as an admirable use to which to put this infatuation.

"They must have very weak men there," said the Tu-tze. "Or they can have no enemies to keep away from their borders."

There was a pause, during which he searched her eyes rather wistfully for approbation, and found none. "It is because you are such a witch," he said, finally, in rather piteous accents. "One does not know what would be in any writing you might send them, or any words you might say if they were brought to you. This much I will tell you, if you will like me better for it. They are all well, though, like you, growing white for want of air."

"Set *them* free, if not me!" begged Winifred, moving a little nearer to him. As a gambler husbands his counters, so she saved for supreme need a few such reserve tactics as these. Each one spent brought nearer the spending of the others, which brought nearer the hour of final reckoning; so it behooved her to exercise the utmost caution, and even cunning, in their outlay.

But the Tu-tze was immovable. "They would bring the men of your own country to take you from me," he said. He knew, and she knew, that it would be impossible to bring the Chinese. "You are very soft and pleasant, and I mean to keep you." His gray eyes were now very wistful, his voice almost tender. "Do you not care for me more than you did yesterday?" he

plead, moving a great deal nearer. Under that dumb direct gaze, Winifred, although she hastily moved back, found a laugh and a sob choking each other in her throat. She realized that this great thing, this mass of will and muscle swayed only by wild primitive emotions—a fierce bull-dog patriotism, an abject superstition lit by occasional flashes of inevitable skepticism—was babyishly in love with her.

Into her mind, hopelessly light and errant, as her sister had so often told her, rose a picture from the *St. Nicholas* of her childish days. It was an illustration to a charming story called "Budsy, the Giant," and showed Budsy, the huge baby-boy, standing crying on the island beach from which the boat of the puny man-visitor was rapidly pushing away. With one mighty fist wiping oceanic tears from his vast dimpled cheeks, with infantine half-hose slipping forlornly down the towering chubby legs, also endowed with cave-like dimples, with his immense pinafore flapping in the wind with force enough to provide sail for an armada, he had always tickled Winifred's fancy, which freakishly linked his image now with that of this love-sick giant, to whose Ingomar she had not the slightest, not the very slightest, desire to play Parthenia.

Assuredly, there must be no dallying with this lighted fuse. She watched it with an anxious eye, her mind running against time with plans of escape, rejected one by one as impracticable. She bethought her of the lamas. It was against their interest to have the Tu-tze marry. But they were more fierce and cruel even than he, who, though he put aside with an impatient sweep of his hand—a steel-like network of

nerves and muscles, with short square-tipped powerful fingers—her claims to supernatural protection, was plainly holding off from marriage for something. Winifred hoped it might be for the approbation of the lords spiritual, for whose increasing stubbornness she devoutly prayed.

Yet she hesitated to trust herself to their mercies. Hidden somewhere within her reluctance, justly ashamed of itself, she discovered to her vexation an absurd fastidiousness about setting the Tu-tze's—poor old baby's, poor Budsy's!—worst enemies against him, to rob him of a woman he unquestionably loved in some fierce helpless fashion. It seemed a cruel combination. Yet she was ready to shake herself for the thought, and almost to agree with one of Hortense's bitter sayings that "Winifred never by any chance did right; she only did things which were wrong and things which were Quixotic."

Besides, how to communicate with a lama? She could not reach her window, nor could sounds from without reach her. One night, however, she thought she heard their horns and drums, their muffled chanting, sounding from within. Concluding that it must be a dream, she turned again on her couch of dried leaves and twigs, and slept serenely.

It was early morning outside, slate-colored dawn in her donjon keep, when she woke—not, I regret to say for her discernment, with a sense of something having happened. Something had happened, however, as she found when she went to the doorway to ask for the water they let her have to wash with, low though the supply was. Kwoh was wont to stand quite unembar-

rassed in the doorway, watching with deep interest the strange ceremony, which was in consequence considerably "cut" to suit the audience. To-day—which still felt like to-night—it was not he who relieved the night guard, but a strange man.

"Where is Kwoh?" she demanded. He had treated her rather well.

"Kwoh is very sick," answered the substitute, excitedly. He was a tall, reedy young man, wild-haired but meek-eyed, with an innocent open mouth which contributed to a general expression of humble astonishment at a strange world. "He rolls and groans, his face is green, and he thinks, and the Tu-tze thinks, it is poison in the food he tastes for our lord. There is great agitation in the castle. The Tu-tze has sent post-haste to the lama-serai in the valley, and nearly the whole monastery has come, with nearly the whole village after them, and they are all gathered in the great hall, the priests chanting scriptures and offering prayers for his recovery. The Tu-tze has promised them no reward for curing him, but has told them he would rather lose three lamas than his faithful Kwoh, so I have a belief they will cure him. There is much agitation," he added again. His tones indicated some regret that he was not present at the scene.

But Winifred had scarcely heard him through. It was a moment for quick action. Here was a new man. There, in the great hall, absorbed in a religious ceremony, were the Tu-tze, the lamas, and every one in the village who could run swiftly down a notched pole and up a hillside—for she knew an Asiatic peasantry. Forlorn, desperate, foolish the venture might be, but there was no time to call it names.

"How are you called?" she asked, rapidly, fixing the new guard with her eye, and wondering how much there was in hypnotism.

"Fan Mah."

"Well, then, Fan Mah, Kwoh is not poisoned. Kwoh will die, but it is not poison. Can you guess what it is, Fan Mah?"

"Witchcraft!" burst from her hearer's pale lips.

Winifred smiled weirdly. "He barred my way," she said, gently. "When I am ready to leave my prison I go—nothing can keep me—but those who attempt it I smite with their death-sickness. Stand aside, Fan Mah—or, no, show me the way out by the rear, and I will spare you the pains which are now tearing Kwoh."

"But the Tu-tze will kill me!" cried her guide, when they reached the door which she instinctively felt opened into freedom. In a sort of daze of obedience he had led her from passageway to passageway, but now belated consideration had evidently come to him, and his big soft face had worked up into lines of consternation till it looked like crumpled putty. "What is to become of me when I go back and relate how you bewitched me?"

"You need not go back. You must accompany me into China." Her alert mind had already grasped the usefulness to the party of a man with two hands. "There I will reward you richly, and you can dwell unmolested. Quick, unlock this door." Her heart was beating against it agonizingly.

"But I do not love China!" almost sobbed the youth. "I love my home, the country of the Shang-Shang-ren."

"Do you not love life too?" asked the witch-woman.

"And do you not feel the pains coming upon you now? Oh, that racking ache—is it not in your frame already?"

"Stop, stop!" plead Fan Mah. "I will unlock. I indeed feel them."

He undid the rude combination of barriers, and plunged Winifred into a brilliant bath of sunshine such as made her fairly choke and gasp, after three weeks of deprivation. She ran blindly on in the direction of the tower. It was not far to walk; it was even less far to run, with a firm grasp on the garments of the trembling tribesman. A shrill ecstatic cry greeted her from overhead:

"It's her, I tell you, it's her!" Agitation is no respecter of nominatives. "Candace, get up and look! Mis' Blaize! Oh, hoist the ladder quick!"

It lay on the ground at the tower's foot instead of propped up against its side—in a flash conveying the history of the past three weeks for Candace and Emma. They had been prisoners too. Were they starving? They did not look it, as they came hastily clambering down after she and Fan Mah had as hastily set up the ladder, though Candace's face bore traces of tears, ancient and modern. "We was all right," Emma explained, breathlessly, "except that they took down the ladder so's we couldn't get out. There was a man come up it every day and brought us food, tasting it first, which was meant kindly, though I was more afraid of it after than before. He told us each time that you were well, but wouldn't say anything more, so we didn't know what to think. How was it? Why did that awful old Tu-tze keep you?"

"He—wanted to marry me," with a half hysterical laugh.

"Well, I never!" gasped Emma. "Legally?" with some sternness.

Winifred looked startled. "I—I did not ask," she owned. For what was her eye seeking, her mind groping? Something present or absent struck her as wrong, disturbing, calamitous. Bringing her hands together with a sharp crash of recollection,—"Where is Matang?" she cried. "Is he unable to descend the ladder?"

"Yes," said Emma. Candace said nothing.

"We—we had to bury him," said Emma, finally, knowing there is no help to be had from youth in these matters. "Don't take on, for he didn't himself, poor boy. He said it was best, and I'm dreadful afraid it was, with only that one hand. You see it kind of worked on him that he couldn't write poetry any more, and he took to brood-in', and tryin' to learn with the other hand, which he couldn't—and he just somehow died. The Nancies dug it. I'll show you the place. They were real kind, and Candace read her Bible out of the window, though of course nobody understood the words, unless 'n it was him. He had really a sort of smile. Don't take on!"

"He—he buried Victor," said Winifred, unsteadily. The part of her life which had held Victor had somehow with this tidings receded another thousand miles away. "And I have killed him. And he served and loved us both well. I served him ill, but I loved him well. You do not guess it until they die."

Her memory was ranging over years of rich joy and heart-companionship and stirring adventure, with which this humble soul, which had seemed but a servant's, but which she now saw was a friend's, faithful, warm

and but half rewarded, had been intertwined. She suddenly sobbed.

"Ain't we going to see about getting away?" put in Emma, hastily. In actuality, women hate other women's tears as men do. "Won't the Tu-tze be chasing us?"

"The Tu-tze?" Winifred's common-sense woke with a start. "Fly up the ladder, Candace, and get the medicine-chest and the manuscript of my journal. We cannot stop for anything else. There is no time to dig up the stores; we must steal food, if we cannot beg it. There is no time for anything except running. I forgot the Tu-tze!"

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"*I* can't forget that Tu-tze," panted Emma, "though I never saw him." It was the first word uttered among the four of them within half an hour, during which time they had put between themselves and the tower a distance incredible save by those who have seen a pack of frightened women run. "Good-by, you old Henry the Eighth!" with a belligerent backward wave of the fist in the direction of the white prayer-flags of Somo, showing gratefully fainter against the sky with each step forward. "May you get your deserts some day, that's all!"

"Don't — say — that," gasped Winifred, between strides. "For one thing, he thinks he deserves me." After all, it was not a crime for which a woman thinks the less of a man. And now that his hand was off her, she realized that it could have clutched far more cruelly than it had done. "I am inclined to believe the Tu-tze is a good deal of a man." How sturdily he stood as a buffer between a grasping priesthood and a prostrate

people, in singular reversal of the conditions familiar in Western history!

Poor Budsy! She flung a semi-sentimental, insincerely regretful glance over her shoulder at the receding battlements of her late prison, and, doing so, uttered a sharp cry and placed her hands over her face. The others stopped short with her.

"Twisted your ankle?" asked Emma.

"Ankle?" Under the real anguish indicated in her ashen face, her convention-loathing soul stirred rebelliously at the imputation of so hackneyed a mishap. "No, I've twisted my heart. Don't dare to argue with me, but go on, all of you, fast as you can. Here's all the money I have," unfastening the belt containing it as she spoke.

"But what is it?" asked Candace, while Emma only stared as though stunned.

"*Lot!* Oh, dastardly, dastardly! How could I forget him, or dream of saving myself while he is a prisoner—to be killed for revenge, perhaps, if I escape?"

Sounds and voices sang and buzzed and breathed in her ear. One was a great bursting sob from a figure half hidden in the grass, at the feet of a dying man he had loved and tended. One was a faint voice saying, "Lot has promised he will never leave you while you want him." No, he had not left her; but she — not even Iscariot had been so vile. Hortense was right: she thought only of herself. Even that barbarian who ruled Somo had more regard for Kwoh.

Emma had found her voice. "Go on without you?" she repeated. "Where should we go on, and how, and why?"

"Because I bid you, and because if you stay here we shall all perish together. Because I will not leave Lot, now that"—self-contemptuously—"I have at last remembered him. And because you know you cannot move me. How? well, this man"—indicating the very nearly weeping Fan Mah—"will guide you to the Chinese frontier, and you will have plenty of money, and the maps I made you both draw. It is a less forlorn hope than staying here."

"But you stay yourself," said Emma, almost savagely, "and all for nothing, or a man, which is nigh the same thing. Whether he's dead or alive, how can you help him? You're a perfect Don—Quicklime is it, or Quickset?"

"I am set," said Winifred, quietly, "and you must be quick, for I see specks on one of those hill-tops which may be people following us. I want you to go to Washington, deposit my journal safely somewhere, find the British Embassy, and tell Michael Traquair—" she hesitated—"tell him that I had not time to write. I will give Candace my wedding-ring—"

"Being more of a favor*ite*," interjected Emma, cuttingly.

"No, but because you have the money belt, and you might be separated. Give him that ring, Candace, and tell him, both of you, that I am his for whatever I may be worth to him—oh, that I will marry him and go with him anywhere, if he can come and save me from that man!" She choked a little over the words. "Tell him particularly that I do not wish him to stir up the United States Government to act in the matter—it would not know what to do, and could not do it if it

did. And the people and the place are too delicious to be saddened by the blessings of civilization. Whatever he does must be personal and unofficial. Tell him that a famine is feared, and he can best buy me back with food, for the Tu-tze seems really to care for his people. Tell him—"

She stopped, suddenly, with bloodless lips. "How is he to find me?" she cried. She held her head erect with a peculiar rigidity, but every muscle in her body, even to her tongue, began to twitch. Was this fear?

The three women looked at one another for a moment they knew they had not to waste. Then Emma spoke, twisting her hands together.

"Mis' Blaize," she said, in a low voice, "I set a lot of store by you. Do you think I would have come out this distance with you if I hadn't? Do you think I wa'n't cured of my foolish, almost to say sinful, desire to see wild things the minute I—I won't say reached China, but—smelled it? Do you think I ain't been afraid every step of the way, and homesick 'most to death for my own safe clean comfortable country?" Tears were beginning to wet her cheeks and get into her voice.

Winifred offered no word, only tried unsuccessfully to control the trembling of her limbs, which seemed to shake the very ground beneath her, and kept her eyes on Emma, who continued: "I got scairt at Shanghai, and have been the same ever since. You remember my complaining sometimes over no bed-clo'es at night? I wasn't cold; but I wanted 'em to stuff into my mouth, so's you wouldn't hear me crying. I stuck to you through thick and thin, and will stick to you if you want

me to stay here; or I will try to get back to America to find Mr. Trapair and give him the map and the notes and all your messages; but I draw the line at comin' back to China ever again, world without end, amen, so there."

"But *I* will come back," eagerly interposed Candace, who had been tingling with the desire to speak. "I am young and strong, and China is my home, and I can show Mr. Traquair the route. I belong to you, and I will return to you without fail." It was impossible, under the circumstances, not to let a little conscious nobility creep into her voice and expression. But Emma pulled her sharply by the arm.

"Those specks are moving," she cried, with energy. "They're men, two or three of 'em, and they're hurrying. Stop talking, and run! No, don't kiss her; she's comin' too. Do, Mis' Blaize, for God's sake, come; or for common sense's, if you'd rather that!"

Winifred shook her head with a motion they knew, and pointed. Fan Mah was already flying in mad fear. One of the figures rapidly approaching on mule-back—the tall one, towering like a god of vengeance in the rude thongs which served him as stirrups, while he lashed the animal forward—was familiar to him as to Winifred. Of their guide they could not afford to lose sight, so Candace followed, the tears running faster down her cheeks than her feet over the parched mountain grass. Emma, with a sound between a sob and a snort, angry, uncouth, and sincere, stopped to press a kiss on the utterly cold and colorless lips of her mistress, which did not move with a word of farewell.

Winifred really could not speak. She could not see

their flying figures, or fear for them, or speculate on their reaching cover before the Tu-tze caught up with them. The grip of fear was upon her—all the fear she never had felt before, such fear as she had not supposed was included in cowering humanity's gamut of suffering. Beneath this numbing terror there was physical pain, for in the quick backward turn of the head toward the castle she had strained a tendon of the neck, and the ache and stiffness spread each moment, an absurd, undignified, but almost intolerable pain; but she did not raise her hand to her neck.

"The Tu-tze will wring it the other way for me," she thought, grimly, and sat quite still, almost as though frozen, watching him gain on the hill's ascent, dismount his mule in haste, apparently dismiss his attendants, for they slowly wheeled and retreated, and hurry toward her alone and on foot—she closed her eyes as in a sickness. In truth, the pain at the base of her head had by now annexed her whole nervous system.

"What do you mean by this action?" asked the Tu-tze, in quick panting breaths. "Why did you dare to escape? Did you not know I wanted you?"

In her own country Winifred had heard men—hungry men, cross and tired men—speak very much like this to their wives. But none had ever spoken so to her. She was physically incapable of speech, however. She only looked dully up at the Tu-tze.

"Are you sick?" he demanded, in his energetic explosive way. "Did they poison you too?"

Still she could not speak; not even when the Tu-tze stooped, picked her up—God, with what ease! though not even the quiver of a frightened nerve opposed him

—and began to run, with her in his arms. The direction was not that of the castle.

The road was rough, and her neck, now aching agonizingly, would have felt the jolts if her whole body had not been paralyzed by a fear as unreasoning as her previous courage had been unreasonable. Ideas stirred sluggishly underneath it, as fish may move beneath the surface of an ice-locked stream. She noticed that the Tu-tze ran well, with the smooth unstumbling step of an athlete, in spite of his own weight, and that—growing deader each moment, as the woman's panic settled heavier upon her—which he carried. She vaguely wondered at the strength of the piston-beat of his heart, which she could distinctly feel. She apathetically admired the whiteness of her own hand, which hung limp and lifeless, the very expression of impotence, over his shoulder, where her swimming eyes could see it. How red the blood would spurt upon it, when he had cut it off like Matang's! Poor lady-hand! which she had let Michael Traquair kiss upon their parting,—now for ever!

Ah, Michael, Michael! faithful friend, patient lover, chivalrous squire of dames of all degrees! If only it were your arms about her, even closer than these; if only it were your feet running, even more swiftly, in what safety might she smile! and not only she, but any other woman in the land, who might trust in you and never be confounded; and not only in you, but in almost any man of almost any land where the civilization she revolted from, the religion she rejected, had spared man the awful tribute of woman's fear, the bitterest incense that was ever burned to strength by

weakness—incense which one would think had long ago stung in his eyes and burned on his lips till life itself became intolerable at such price.

Michael, Michael! her soul wept, as a frightened child for its mother. With every step, with every jolt which sent a corresponding quiver of terror through her, she felt more and more that she adored him.

"Be—each—pray—God—a—gentle—man." The jolts also shook these words, in mechanical sequence and senseless reiteration, into her mind, over and over. A gentle man! how little she had ever looked into the meaning of the syllables whose inner spirit had well-nigh

"Made brutes men, and men divine;"

how little prized the thing itself when it lay close to her hand. Now she was thousands of miles from home, her last friends borne from her—she hoped—farther with each fleeing moment, her one protector imprisoned, and she herself in the power completely of a strong and cruel and loving man, who bore her on, dying with pain and trembling with fear, in frantic haste to some place and purpose unknown, faster and faster, his own breath coming shorter and shorter, until, her head falling back dizzily, with the wrench of the tortured tendons, she uttered a furtive cry.

The Tu-tze stopped, set her down, though still retaining a firm clutch upon her, and looked at her. "Are you afraid of me?" he asked, naïvely.

For answer Winifred swayed over—into the swimming valley below, it seemed to her—in almost the first faint of her life.

CHAPTER XII.

SHADES OF THE PRISON-HOUSE.

"'O light, light, light!' she cries, 'farewell!
The coal-black horses wait for me.
O shade of shades, where I must dwell,
Demeter, mother, far from thee!
Ah, fated doom that I fulfill!
Ah, fateful flower beside the rill!
The daffodil, the daffodil!'"

"You have no cause to be afraid," remarked her captor, cheerily, when she had recovered from her faint without the aid of restoratives, as women will do when there are no restoratives to be had. It had not in the least alarmed him. Cataleptic trances, secular and religious, are familiar phenomena in even the remotest corners of the contemplative East; and he had merely waited civilly, and on the whole patiently, for her to come out of it and sit up stupidly against a tree, trying to re-hitch her wagon to the star of existence.

His smile was so bright and her dread so great that she found herself smiling timidly, servilely, in return. Good God! was it to be so all the rest of her life? No!—and the Tu-tze again picked her up in his arms, still dreadfully smiling, and held her without the least strain, while she vainly exerted her not inconsiderable strength to fling herself out of them headlong into the stony valley beneath. It was bitter, bitter—it was slavery,

slavery, of body and soul alike, that threatened her; her womanhood to be humbled, her intellectual integrity to crumble in the slow decay of subjection, her pure heart's freshness to be trampled by a creature whose conception of love was that of the tiger and the ape.

And as he finally set her down she bowed her head and literally bit the dust. The Tu-tze gazed at her in surprise.

"What possesses you?" he asked. "I thought you were sick, and I was taking you to the monastery, where they have many charms to cure sickness and poison—and, I doubt not, to produce them too. I will not take you if you are unwilling. I have no desire to risk myself unarmed among those shaven"—he looked cautiously about and behind him, then added, firmly, "devils!"

"You were then running away to the men of your own country," he hazarded, without acrimony. They laugh who win. "I cannot conceive why you still prefer them to me."

"I do not prefer them," said Winifred, desperately. "I was running to freedom, which is the only thing I love in the wide earth." The thought of her prison was maddening her. Yesterday she could endure it, as the alternative of a fate more dreadful; now there was small question but that the fate and the prison both awaited her.

She suddenly threw herself at his feet, a suppliant for the first time in her life. After all, he was human; God, in whom for the moment she fervently believed, as men will when they want something, had not left Himself without witness among any people. "Tu-tze,

I am not like other women! I have a light nature and a gipsy eye, and I love no man. I love only the air, and freedom to range, without which I will die. And like you, I cannot own a master."

"I would not rule you," said the Tu-tze, good-humoredly. There was a certain appalling finality about his air of complete control of the situation, and all situations. "The Tibetans are ruled by their women, because there are so few of them to so many men. That is unmanly, especially as the Tibetan women are very ugly. The Chinese, people say, thrust their wives into the house and tie up their feet. Our Man-tze maidens would not stand that. I will be very mild and pleasant with you, for that is my nature, as all my subjects will tell you."

"But I cannot love a man not of my own country!" How, how make him understand?

"You have just said you did not love the men of your own country. It is not natural for a woman not to love some man. You will love me, for I will take care that you shall see no other."

"You spoke," said Winifred, still trying to be calm, "of the Golok descending and capturing your women against their will, as though that were an offence."

"But the Golok are barbarians," stated the Tu-tze, incontrovertibly.—"We might as well walk back to the castle now, for my beast, I see, has wandered off. It would be sweet to me to carry you," somewhat sadly; "but you try to throw yourself down the mountain when I do. I cannot conceive why."

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If any voice within or without had suggested to her

that Michael Traquair might not heed her cry for help, Winifred would have answered that she had known him for twelve years. The only question was, could he come in time?

Nothing was more futile than the process of computing, or attempting to compute, how long a period must elapse before Emma and Candace could reach San Francisco, and from San Francisco Washington. And then the whole terrible tedious route must be retraced again. Chances of tide and weather, of the good or ill-will of capricious villagers, the thousand and one accidents of travel, and, above all, Chinese travel, would govern events. The computation being futile, she spent on it a large portion of her aimless unlighted days.

To say that this was her one comfort would be touching, but untrue. Being, as Hortense had always impressed upon her, of a nature fatally flexible, almost criminally cheerful, she made the best of matters, and the best of matters was Daisy, who was seldom out of her society. Wild out-doors creature that she herself was, Winifred wondered at any one caring so much for any one else as to deliberately leave the sunshine to burrow in a dungeon and climb over the lap of its occupant. Such, however, seemed to be the taste of the Tu-tze's small freakish son.

"O that you could teach him to speak!" sighed Kwoh, with whom her relations were becoming somewhat friendly. "If you could do that, I think the Tu-tze might in gratitude release you, greatly though he desires you."

"I doubt it," replied Winifred, rather quickly, recall-

ing how the Tu-tze's eyes hung in sickness upon hers. Through every stratum of human development a man is a man, his love is love, and a woman is a woman, not insensible to the flattery of a homage she could not possibly accept. But her heart kindled with the hope thus carelessly held out to her. She took Daisy's grimy little hands from her face, which they were inquisitively feeling, and held them.

"Listen," she began, impressively, in the Man-tze tongue. And then she and Kwoh laughed together.

"What is his name?" she inquired. It seemed absurd to even think of him any more as Daisy.

But Kwoh shook his head. "He is the Tu-tze's son," he replied, with reserve. "We do not give our rulers' names, nor those of their offspring, for foreign folk to work spells with." And for the first time she realized that she did not know the Tu-tze's name. Nor had he ever asked hers. Oh, singular people, primitive below even the nominative necessity of human intercourse!

In her girlhood's home had lived an aged aunt, who was stone deaf, and whose sight was too impaired for her to read writing, so that the language of signs was her only medium of communication with the outside world. Winifred had been obliged to learn it that she might interpret for her elder sister, who remarked with feeling that the hardest part always fell upon her; it was so dreadful to have to drag a reluctant child from her tomboy games or her everlasting atlas, before one could talk to one's own aunt. To recast these symbols into even greater simplicity for this completely unawakened little mind to grasp was not easy, but it was

possible, when the goal was liberty. She coaxed, she caressed, she persevered, and in three days the child was able to exchange a few elementary ideas with her teacher, and both were delighted. But the Tu-tze frowned.

"You must teach me these magic-motions also," he commanded. "I thought you said you were not a witch?" As a matter of fact, Winifred had been too wary to make any such statement. "I have never been able to talk with him since he was born. It is my greatest sorrow. I can learn these signs, for I have great understanding. If you could talk with him secretly, you might charm him into helping you to escape."

So Winifred increased her class, even taking in Kwoh, who was stupid beyond the limit of human expectation. It passed the time, and it might—though the hope, like herself, grew languid with the days—purchase her liberty. And the Tu-tze's progress astonished her. His active mind dashed at knowledge, viciously worried the meat off it, then rapidly swallowed it and triumphantly digested it, very much like a dog with a bone. Then he would naïvely compliment his own superior intelligence, since his teacher was chary of praise.

But she said to him, impulsively, one day, "Tu-tze, you are a man of sagacity, of spirit, of patriotism. Have you never dreamed of raising an army of rebels from among your own people and the Tibetans, and oversweeping China to conquer its people as their forefathers did yours?"

The Tu-tze shook his head. "Never," he said, emphatically. "What would I do with more territory? It keeps me rising early and watching late and imposing

punishments as things are, when I have only to govern the Shang-Shang-ren. I love fighting only when I am angered. Then I see red. What I desire is peace, and a contented and famine-freed people, and a loving wife's arms." He paused, eyeing her with some wistfulness, and evidently expecting some suitable response from her which did not come.

"I could not conquer China," he pursued, calmly. "I live afar, yet talk reaches me. You foreigners will take it. But should we arise, our little people would only be swept from the earth. My own mountain country satisfies me."

"And have you never," asked Winifred, with real curiosity, "once felt the desire to see beyond your mountains?"

"Why should I?" inquired the Tu-tze.

Winifred thought of him in a flash as a spiritual twin of Hortense. True, Hortense might not fancy him, but she could not fancy him less than Winifred did!

"I was four years in a foreign country," continued the Tu-tze, crisply, "and I did not like it. I went lost and cold and hungry, driving stubborn herds over the hot desert and through winter snows. It was not so good as my own fertile valleys, I knew, though I was but young."

"Then you have been in China after all!" she exclaimed.

"No. In Tibet, in my youth. When I was kidnapped, you know." He spoke as though all school histories contained the fact, or else as though kidnapping were as ordinary an incident of boyhood as birching.

"It was the Golok who took me, but the lamas who sold me to them. That is why I now so love them both. My father was old, and in the power of women and priests. All wished me away—each of his wives (for he had a foolish number of them) that the son she might bear could be Tu-tze in my place; the lamas, that the line might become extinct, and they set up one of themselves as chieftain. My parents and the people were told wild beasts had killed me in a mountain pass, and my mother wandered in search of me, without food, and sorrowing, up and down the hillsides until she perished with cold. That was a bad thing." He knotted his brow. "But I was a lad already ten, and did not so much need a mother."

"Four years of wandering," he musingly repeated, "when I did not know where I was, nor my way home; nor could the Tibetans have told me the one or shown me the other, for they were ignorant folk, more like brutes than men. But they knew enough to beat me. I learned to seize food and run quickly, I can tell you! They were roving bandits—chukpas—who lived by robbing caravans. And now"—with a droll look—"I place robbers' heads in cages. It seems very strange to think of, does it not? but I had to do the best for myself then and for my people now. The sheep and mules and yak they captured they made me herdsman of. I thought that a bad thing, but it was really a good thing, for I learned to control men by controlling them, having ever in my mind the return to my father's territory. 'You are the Tu-tze,' I would say to myself, 'and these are your people. Do not let yourself be disobeyed.' So they were brought back if they strayed,

and learned to know my voice, so that I never lost an animal. It meant much work, though," he added, reflectively.

"Then one day I realized that I was fourteen years old and a man. Tibet is a great country, but my feet must in the four years have traversed it from end to end, and even possibly crossed the borders into Turkestan or China. And what had I learned? Not the way to Somo, for no one in Tibet will tell you the true names of places, and all mountainous places look alike. Not to read or write—that I had to learn after I became Tu-tze. Not to fight, in the sense of leading armies, but to attack travelers in the night, and then run away if they were too many, or their dogs too fierce, or their weapons too good.

"I felt my head baking in me, my heart burning. I signified a desire to become a monk. I had my head shaved, and wore the novitiate robe and learned to babble '*Om mani padme hum*,' and—that was all there was to it." That indescribable twinkle was in his eye again. "I have not the voice for chanting prayers, though no one respects religion more than I do. But as a lama of the third degree I joined a pilgrim procession returning from L'hasa, and they, at last, knew something. It is very foolish not to know something. I found the road to Somo, I hid in the tent of a muleteer, and did not disclose myself to the people until the muleteer, who was Kwoh's father, had at my instigation stirred up the people against the lamas, who now ruled my father more than ever.

"Then one day I appeared in the market-place, shaven head and all, and made a proclamation to the

people, bidding them follow me to the castle. It was an exciting time," with evident relish in the recollection, "for some of them did not recognize me, and there was blood shed even before we reached the castle. We marched in without trouble. I have always remembered that, and seen to it that they who would reach me and take away my lordship should have trouble. I took prisoner my own father and his wives, none of whom," somewhat maliciously, "had borne him more sons. We captured also the lamas that buzzed about the castle like flies about honey, and I gave orders that all should be killed; but some," with keen regret in his tones, "escaped over the mountains and returned with a force of Golok at their backs, which was the best thing they could have done for me, for the people surged up from the villages south and east to defend their homes.

"That was a bloody time!" with animation. "I was too young then to see red when anger seized me, and the sight of so much slaughter frightened me, for I was but fourteen; but," frowning, "those I led never guessed it, and by the time it was over I could have gone through it again and joyed in it. When the Golok had retreated I remembered that I was only a boy, and released my father, who was really glad to see me back, and until he died was a submissive son to him and to his wives, who never bore him any better offspring." This thought seemed to afford the Tu-tze intense delight. "But he soon died, and I became ruler, and there has been peace, even upon the Chinese border, ever since."

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If Winifred Blaize had hoped that the pursuit of

knowledge would distract the Tu-tze from his pursuit of her, she reckoned without her host.

Into her life of thirty years, broadened with travel and rich in experience such as comes to few men or women of twice her age, ordinary love-making had played a less part than enters into that of many a girl of sixteen. The grotesque phenomena of so-called civilized courtship, a study for Gulliver himself, which like a false corona play around the bald human necessity for choosing a mate, were unknown to her. Married at twenty, she had never before that time given a bashful youth the euphemistic encouragement which flatly means, "Come inspect me, and be inspected, that we may see if we can fall in love with each other." The great machine called Society, constructed nominally for the exchange of companionship among all human beings, but really revolving round the purpose of marrying off the marriageable ones, had never caught her within its cogs. Michael Traquair had only loved her, not made love to her. He had not dared. Emotionally, her life had consisted of a blank, then Victor, then a blank again.

Victor himself had won rather than wooed her, the two strange natures recognizing their complement with a simplicity which out-Miranda-ed Miranda on the isle of Prospero—meeting and mating in almost the same breath, with a swiftness and a tranquil disregard of conventionalities which startled Winifred's sister and guardian into secretly "thanking her European God," like Morrowbie Jukes, that they did marry, instead of just stopping short of that too.

The courtship never begun had never been finished.

—Enough of that. Victor, whose last words were a prayer that she should choose herself a life-companion, must be thrust back into the dust of death where dead things belong, lest she weep—or, perchance, from the Place of Spirits, he too—at the thought of the strange successor the horrible pleasantry of Fate was to give him. No, never! though the Tu-tze had taken from her the knife she could have put to a hundred purposes ere now. Never, although he made his suit as humbly as any meek Man-tze lover following after a free-footed, handsome, teasing Man-tze girl.

Evidently—and mercifully—it had not occurred to him that he could do anything else. His country's custom bound him, besides those impalpable chains woven out of mist and dreams by the glamour of sex for sex, under whose spell the strong man sits spinning Omphale's flax, with the weakness of intoxication upon him. It was plainly love—the crude pathetic passion of a tenacious nature—and not a caprice of a night's duration, with which she had to battle.

"Why do you talk of escaping?" he asked her, with his ever-budding surprise. "You must not. I love you so. Why do you not love and desire me as I you? You walk before me wherever I go, even upon the ramparts to watch for the Tibetans, and still I am alone. I will put another sentry beside Kwoh, to help him resist your escape; and as for killing yourself, you cannot do it, for I wear your dagger next my body as you wore it."

His burning anxious gaze flashed up and down her like the ray of a sun-glass. "You are white," he cried, in sudden anguish, "whiter even than when you first

came here, and your arms are less round, like our Man-tze maidens' when there is famine." It was rather piteous to see so much of a man unhappy. His great shoulders heaved magnificently, recalling a bull-fight Winifred had once witnessed in South America. He spoke thickly. "Your food is sufficient. I send it from my own table. Are you secretly taking poison?"

"Poison?" echoed Winifred, passionately. "Yes, Tu-tze, I take poison. It is the poison of darkness, of captivity, of hopelessness. Could a blade of grass live in this place? Yet you offer me it, or—" and her voice trembled—"a husband who is hateful to me."

The Tu-tze's white teeth vanished in one of those frowns of the lips that mean so much more than the frown of the brow, which a mere flash of sunshine may cause. "Gladly would I give you a little light and air," he said, almost coldly, "if there were any way of preventing your escape to the men of your own country."

"You might try what you put on your other prisoners," retorted Winifred—"the wooden collar."

The Tu-tze looked at her and left the room. That was all; but it set her fears throbbing. It was not a look one cared for, from a man who held one's fate in the hollow of his hand. The stern smileless displeasure in it filled her with panic; the blazing reproach in it set her surprised conscience to blubbering in grief, very much as a baby does the first time the tormented cat turns round and scratches it.

Had she overshot her mark? Loved or hated, she was in this man's power; and now, with that angry wounded glance rankling in her memory, it was miser-

ably clear to her that the comparative safety she had hitherto enjoyed she had owed to the atmosphere of awe with which his rude strange love had surrounded her. Destroy this glamour—and she had desperately gone to every length of disdain, of sharpness, of defiance, to do it—and where was the safety? Tactless fool! she bitterly called herself. Had not a barbarian hands, organs, dimensions, affections, passions? was he not warmed by the same summer of gentleness, cooled by the same winter of disdain, as other men? if pricked, would he not bleed? if wronged, would he not revenge?

But when he came in the next day he was smiling broadly, heartily, infectiously, as was usual when he was not frowning. "I do not want you to die," he began at once, abruptly. "If I could think of any way to give you some air, and yet not risk losing you, I would very gladly do it."

"You might put me on parole," suggested Winifred. She patiently explained the word and idea, alike foreign, while he bent his big brows, every few minutes interrupting her with sharp explosive questions as to whether she really would abide by such an extraordinary vow, should he do such an extraordinary thing as to trust her.

"Everybody lies so," he said, doubtfully, "even my brave Shang-Shang-ren, even myself; but I only when it is necessary, for if you do not tell the truth usually, there is no use in lying. But I will try you—though not to-day, not any day."

Winifred's face fell, as the rebuffed hope struck her heart like lead, but the Tu-tze smiled. "I do not lie

to *you!*" he said, bluffly. "If the lamas saw you it would inflame them. I do not fear them, and I love fighting, but not with my own people, of whom there are few enough as it is. To-night, on the ramparts, where no one can see us, we will walk together." His voice sank in softness. Winifred half wished she had been refused.

* * * * * * *

The gate-dogs burst up at them with fierce baying, but the Tu-tze, who seemed really fond of them, silenced them by a smart blow on the forehead with the back of his hand. "It is your master, foolish ones," he said. "Save your voices for enemies."

Winifred could have lifted her own voice and sung, as she had done in the mountain passes for sheer delight in life. The air whizzed live and pure, and blessedly cold, against her wasting cheeks, and brushed her yellow curls from her damp forehead. The golden moon bathed her, as it had done on that enchanted night on the top of the tower. Instead of tons of crushing stone, the firmament hung over her, merrily twinkling its starry eyes at her, reminding her of unexplored worlds of space. Walls were about her, but they were those of the eternal hills, from whence was to come her help.

For of course Michael would come and save her. When had he ever failed her, or any one? Oh, the great, glorious outside world! To embrace the sweet free air of it, she poised herself lightly, dangerously, on one heel, and swung herself round like a whirling dervish, with arms extended, while the Tu-tze eyed her in an agony of amorous speechlessness.

Winifred reached out her hand for the spy-glass—his

heart's pride, next to his child—and he humbly surrendered it. Her quick strong gaze swept the horizon with it—ah, the horizon! she had forgotten its vastness! She wheeled about and surveyed the mysterious North, land of fierce Golok, shut off by barrier of mountain-spurs higher and rougher even than that which lay beneath her, with all Somo clambering picturesquely up and down its slopes. More mountains cut off her view of China, but she knew it lay beyond them. And to the west the glaciers of the Tibetan mountains, incorruptible guardians of enticing secrets, glittered silverly in the moonlight through gaps in the nearer ranges.

Oh, she could not give up the horizon again! and she bent a sudden scrutiny on the Tu-tze.

"I know what you are thinking," he said, bluntly. His gray eyes could not leave her yellow ones. He spoke with difficulty. "You are thinking you could push me over the wall and down into the chasm. It would do no good. Even if you escaped the dogs and the sentries, do you think my people would not tear you to pieces? For myself, I would not care much if you did it, if first you let me press against my face your white one."

"I was not thinking of that," answered Winifred, rather compassionately. It would not do to let him know of what she had been thinking. She had asked herself an extraordinary thing, in the instant's desperate gasp toward precious liberty. Would it be possible to marry the Tu-tze?

She swept him over and over with her yellow eyes, and their flame fell reflected on the Tu-tze's heart. In a moment he was at her feet—she could easily now

have pushed him over the rampart—praying, coaxing her with uncouth Man-tze love-names, defying her to defy him, writhing in the grief of a passion which had suddenly become intolerable. Then he sprang to his feet again and towered over her, a fine figure of a man, —if one could be satisfied with that. But who is? Even the dull cave-woman picked one low-browed mate out from the rest.

"I will not do this!" he panted. "It is not manly. I am Tu-tze, and I do not know what you mean by disobeying me. When I first looked on you, I felt fire in me, and now it is smothering my heart. I neglect everything for you, even to watch for the wild tribes. Listen!" He was kneeling again. A red hat was seen by both of them cautiously withdrawing itself behind a tree somewhere down-hill in "the view," as Emma called it, but neither spared it a thought from the absorbing moment. "For two nights Kwoh has walked the battlements in place of me, the Tu-tze, and I, the Tu-tze, have slept before your door in place of him, that I might hear you breathe. To that I, the Tu-tze, have come! It is not manly, but—ah, I love you, I love you, I love you. Teach me to say it in the finger-language, if you like that best. I will never speak again; I will be like my son; I will do anything you wish. You *shall* love me; I will bewitch you with my eyes, as you have done with me. Am I not noble to look at? am I not strong to fight? am I not young? You shall, you shall desire to be in my arms, and I will not look away as you are looking!"

But she was not looking away. His strong square-tipped fingers twitched; his massive frame trembled

impressively, his gray eyes melted into the essence of supplication, his face suffused in a glow of the will. Unconsciously, he was exerting to win her the supreme power of mere manhood—its strength and its summons, the splendor of its vitality, the poignant charm of its confessed incompleteness. It touched Winifred remotely; she accorded it a confused recognition, as a careless worshiper gives a perfunctory nod to a shrine; but her mind was preoccupied with two amazing surprises.

One was the fact that this man had brought her out into the moonlight to propose to her, like any other man—"and him a heathen," as Emma would have added. The other was conveyed to her in his simple, reproachful question, "*Am I not young?*"

Almost rubbing her eyes, she studied him all over again. "That funny old Tu-tze," she had written him down in her note-book. Incidentally, he was not funny, unless there is something comic in the quivering mass of noble flesh-and-blood that falls victim to the matador's spear at a bull-fight. But, above all, and overwhelmingly, he was not old! No subtle crow's-feet at the corners of the alert hawk-eyes; no frosting in the abundant black locks coiled round the head in the "effeminate" fashion whose offence cried to Emma's Yankee Heaven for interference; no failing of flexibility in the powerful limbs which had once borne her weight so easily. She recognized that she shuddered less now at the thought. A virile, rugged, not uninteresting personality, far above the mildewed Hindu rajahs or the oily mandarins, lolling in their loathsome rolls of fat and supine comfort in screened palaces, whom dainty European girls now and then married.

She had never been one of those persons who cannot understand Desdemona's loving the Moor. She herself could have loved a Moor like Othello; or an Arab, which was the same thing—oh, easily an Arab! almost with pleasure! Why was not this nameless chief of a nameless race some splendid Bedouin sheik, riding to her

"On a stallion shod with fire,
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand"—

Well, the Tu-tze had watched all night at her door to hear her breathe. The breath would doubtless have left her had she known it. And he too was pleading the equivalent of—

"Look from thy lattice, and see
My passion and my pain;
I lie on the sands below,
And I faint in thy disdain.
Let the night-wind touch thy brow
With the heat of my burning sigh,
And melt thee to hear the vow
Of a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold."

In what girl's scrap-book are the words not written? And Winifred was more than a girl—she was very nearly a boy. Her light mind, easily diverted from its object as her gipsy eye, trailed off to the next stanza:

"My steps are nightly driven
By the fever in my breast"—

"I felt fire in me" had been the Tu-tze's rendering—as fine, as free, as impetuous. To be loved that way was something. And freedom was even more. The lines ran on in her head:

> "Open the door of thy heart,
> And open thy chamber door,
> And my kisses shall teach thy lips"—

Oh, God of Heaven and earth and of the civilization that is therein, no, no, no! There was the test!

She staggered under the breaking of this hideous temptation. The horror-frozen eyes of Hortense floated before her, and for the first time she felt a faint sympathy for that oft-outraged sister. "Take me in, Tu-tze," she said, hurriedly. "No, do not stop to reconnoitre for the Golok."

"But I like it out here with you," said the Tu-tze. "The moon is nearly as golden as your eyes and hair."

"But let us go in," begged the woman. "In my country we have a saying that moonlight gives madness."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REPENTANCE OF CANDACE.

"STOP running," gasped Emma. "I'm not young enough to stand it. I don't care what happens."

Candace stopped short and put her firm young arms about Emma's wavering form. There was nothing else for her to lean against in the timberless region they had now reached. Years ago each tree had been felled, each precious splinter gathered, each hollow where a stump had clung sown with some life-giving seed, for in China there is a mouth to every foot of earth. Candace fanned the elder woman with her loose fluttering upper robe, making her sit on the great rough stone on the tiny rough path around which generations of heavy-laden coolies would continue to pick their unreflective way, *in seculæ seculorum.*

"Poor thing!" she said, pitifully, with the perhaps all too ready protectorate assumed by youth over age. "Do not cry!"

"I c-can't help it," sobbed Emma. Her voice had sunk to the husky whisper which denotes complete exhaustion. "I'm crying to think I *am* crying, and me with such good stock in me, and to think I've been running, even if it was from sticks and stones. Candace, that Irish stuff's moving!"

Candace glanced apprehensively at the paddy-stalks

which grew dank and lank and rank in great patches of green on either side of the narrow red clay embankment called a path. "It is wind," she said, soothingly. "'Men in the distance?' Yes, but they are harmless coolies."

"Who'll call us straight-eyed foreigners, as if we was ashamed of it," wept Emma. "Candace, you've been a good little girl to me, and I used to be dreadful jealous of you with Mis' Blaize, but that's all past and done with. I guess you better run on, and leave me here to die or be killed by those coolies."

"But they are harmless," repeated Candace, in despair.

The two women watched the little procession looming nearer and more distinct along the embankment line, with a scarcely hidden trepidation. The coolies' burdens showed first, *pei-tzes* or baskets of salt and tea, or packets of silk, forming huge humps under which the half-naked dripping bodies bent double; then the sensible straw basin-hats, then, bowed low and pressed into hard patient lines of weariness, the mild featureless faces of the saddest and most inaccessible of living and suffering creatures—the Oriental peasant, who does not know he suffers and scarce knows he lives. For him time has not beat one second's advance since the days when "He had compassion on the multitude, seeing that they" [literal version] "lay down and were tired, as sheep having no shepherd."

Harmless toilers they might be; but the last one in passing turned back a sullen face, and brutally spat at them. "Beasts!" he hissed. "You will not again build against Feng Shui in a hurry, will you?"

Candace shuddered. She knew what he meant. In the village left a few *li* behind, a dazed little group of life-devoted men and women were sitting about a black cinder-heap where their mission-school had stood, and asking themselves what everything meant. "Hurry on," the women had urged Candace and Emma, with streaming faces. "We cannot feed you; we cannot house you. They will burn us next. They did not use to be like this. It is strange, very strange."

Things were strange, very strange, during that whole return journey from the border wilderness. It was not because of material obstacles, for of these there were singularly few. They met with no accidents. Viceroys and villagers were only too glad to pass them on to the eastward. The Yang-tze steamers went down instead of up stream; they shot the booming rapids instead of wearily climbing them. "You can talk till I'm deaf, Candace Roberts," said Emma, with conviction, "but you can't persuade me that all China isn't contrary. In America, when you want to go to the bad place, all's greased for the occasion. Here they make it easy getting away from it."

It was an impelling rather than an opposing force which made that journey an evil, never-forgotten dream. Impalpable horror crept upon horror, unreasoning fear upon fear, urging them to frantic haste to escape unknown calamity. As a blind man feels the thunder-cloud by the cold scent of the coming storm, as a sick man might languidly trace on his body the slow action of some deadly drug, and yet be helpless to say in what form it was conveyed to him, so they felt—something. Had they known what it was, they would not have felt

it. It overhung the whole luckless land, never thriving with all its thrift, never happy despite the possession of a flawless philosophy of life. The clang of the iron on the anvil, of the hammer in the arsenals they passed, had an ominous sound, though they scarcely guessed that in accordance with plans long formed the plowshare was being beaten into the sword, the armories quietly re-stocked with weapons—paid for, by the irony of fate, with loans from foreign countries.

Workless workmen stood about the town gates and glowered at dispirited-looking merchants bringing back, by bales and catties, the goods they could not sell, for the Chinese has the overwhelming virtue of not buying unless he can pay. Children cried distressingly at night. "It is the little girls whose feet are first being bound," Candace said; but soon they learned it was little boys too, and wee babies, who very wisely wailed themselves out of a world where stomachs were not properly filled. As the spirit of unrest and insubordination sweeps over a schoolroom, province passed on to province the whisper, "We are miserable!" and were the more miserable for saying it. And then, looking about them, sullen and desperate, for a great first cause, the eye lit on the foreigner.

How could it help lighting on the foreigner? His ugly bleached face, his uncouth figure in its immodest close-fitting garments, were everywhere, demanding everything. He demanded land on which to build his houses of God and Mammon after the hideous pattern of his barbaric country. He demanded the privilege of introducing strange quick confusing ways of doing

things, and he did not care if in so doing he trod on every nerve in China.

If these foreigners only knew anything! even one verse from the classics, even the simplest requirement of Feng Shui, "wind-and-water" luck, which determines how a house shall safely face other houses! But no, they only knew the black and baleful arts of poisoning wells, and of making and taking money at every turn. And as the gaze of the harried mediæval merchant, frantic with losses on sea and land, burned on the meek sleek Jew stealing inoffensively along the Rialto, so the Chinaman gazed bitterly at Emma and Candace, when they stopped for a few hours' rest and the food which was grudged them even while they paid double for it.

"Something's going to happen, Candace," Emma would say, catching the girl's hand. "Their looks bite into the back of your head. This is an awful country."

And so it was on Candace's slender shoulders that the responsibility for the journey gradually slipped—its planning, its dickering, its provisioning; and somehow, by her inheritance of New-England "gumption," by blind luck, and by Winifred's money-belt of blessed fullness, a beautiful civilized Yang-tze steamer eventually brought them into Shanghai, which, Emma said, "compared with the Tu-tze's tower, seemed 'most like home." By a piece of great good fortune, there was just time to reach Japan in season to catch the semi-monthly Pacific liner for America.

With the passage money paid and the tickets safely deposited in a pocket—a pocket! in a civilized gown such as a Caucasian woman should wear!—Emma felt

strength refilling her poor frightened heart. Standing with dilating eyes on the dock, which she would not leave lest her ark of safety vanish, "We're going home," she hummed, happily,

> "No more to roam,
> No more to'—

"What is it, Candace?" for the young girl's arm had slipped nervelessly out of hers.

"Nothing," said Candace, heavily.

Emma looked at her in amazement. Her eyes were glassy. The pink of her azalea cheek was gone.

"Poor child!" said her senior, contritely. "She's been doing too much, and now she's ailing, and I, like a pig, ate the last grain of quinine when we was skirtin' round those swampy paddy-fields. Cheer up, Candace, we're going where there ain't any paddy-fields, or anything Chinese. I'll be as glad to get back to things," she continued, with increasing blitheness, "as I was to get away from 'em. As for those precious little lambs of nephews, I'll spend all the three hundred odd dollars I was providentially kept from squandering on this trip on a train-load of popguns for 'em, and am only sorry I can't take along a few Chinamen for 'em to shoot at."

Candace did not reply. What will not a snatch of music do? A moment before, rosy, happy, she had looked with brilliant, expectant eyes out into the future. An ocean voyage, a visit to her father's country, the exciting return journey with a lover, even though not her own (the world never loves a lover with such holy reverence as at sixteen, when the mere species commands the breathlessness of awe), whom she would guide to the

rescue of their cherished lady — her heart had been quickening to the adventure for weeks. And now Emma, with the careless humming of an English hymn she remembered hearing her father sing in her babyhood's home at Ngan Kin, had turned it all into sickness.

You have spent Sunday in a strange house when you were small, have you not? and—a moment since perfectly happy and contented with your play — suddenly crept into the corner of its dark back stairs and wept? Or, sitting in peace within your own four walls, surrounded by your dearest loved, a sudden chill has come upon you, a feeling of remoteness and strangeness in your environment, of *not belonging*—mysterious, appalling, not to be described; only to be shuddered over as we shudder over that Judgment-Day picture of souls literally lost amidst a sea of faces, while One in whose presence they have eaten and drunk, and in His name cast out devils, says to them stonily, "I know you not."

So was it with Candace, whom an hour's changes would tear from the too much she had known, the too little she had loved, in her sad short life. Her swimming eyes, in desperate search of last memories, swept the scene before them — the fine substantial dock, the trim white war-vessels of all nations, rocking sleepily with the sluggish tide like tame leviathans, the gay rolling junks with their umber sails, whose leering eyes seemed to wink at her maliciously. Behind her, the beautiful emerald lawns, the crowded Bund; before her, the opening mouth of the river; beyond that, the unknown.

When they had crossed the "Boadicea's" gang-plank and felt the floor of the ship actually beneath their feet,

she had a violent impulse to throw herself into the water and at least drown in China. It was her mother's country, if America was her father's. Oh her mother! Oh her father! What if they *had* sold her? They were hers, she was theirs, she must find them, she must stay with them in her native land, though they sold her again!

"I'm going to see the town once more," she said, rapidly. "There is an hour before we start. I'll be back." It was her first lie, and she instinctively looked down to see the ground yawning at her feet. But it was a gang-plank, whose only trembling was that caused by the feet of fellow passengers rushing back and forth.

She did not stay to hear what Emma might say. She felt reasonably certain that she would never cross that plank to revisit Chinese Shanghai in search of her. And to Chinese Shanghai Candace's feet were carrying her, fast as panic could impel.

She knew she was being very wicked. There was the lie just spoken—and again she glanced down at her feet—and there was Emma's terror and anxiety when the boat should move off without a Candace on board. And there was Mr. Traquair, who could never find his way to the Tu-tze's mountain retreat without her guidance. And, last and most painful of all, there was her loved lady, who had rescued her from the fate into which she was rushing back.

But she was homesick.

Deeper and deeper into the familiar slums of the native city she plunged, her great gray eyes dilated with fear, not fear of the filthy houses, with dingy swinging signs advertising the evil she did know of

and such further iniquity as her innocent soul could not comprehend. Heads turned after her—the barber's, stopping short in his street operations; and even that of the barber's customer; the restaurateur's, halting in his street preparation of cakes of bean-curd and curries of half-decayed fish; the coffin-seller's, whose face peeped weirdly from between the ranks of twelve-foot sarcophagi, standing end to end in the narrow weltering street—to him, and thousands of fellow-mortals, shop and home, good to live in and to die in. For Chinese streets are used to hurry, but not to hurrying women.

What was Candace seeking, with the terrible scent of the opium for guide? She forgot now and then. Ah, yes, it was her parents. Harsh faces scowled at her, or leered with semi-recognition, as she pushed aside the matting portieres and vainly pierced the still thicker curtains of dusky smoke—and still she was too frightened to be afraid, until, just at the threshold of Lung Chao's den, her last hope, a hot lean hand seized hers, a cracked voice begged huskily for "One cash, one bit of money, the droppings from your pipe, beautiful, pitiful young girl! the water in which the pipe has been washed, the earth on which the water has been poured, the pot into which the earth was made, anything, in the name of the Goddess of Mercy, to stay my crawling entrails!"

She started. The ape-like face, caving away from the brown knotted veins, was not her father's. But she recognized that she had feared it might be. A trembling greater than any yet seized upon Candace. She pushed aside the curtain.

"Lung Chao!" she cried, in a loud quivering voice.

"Is my father there? is my mother?"—Oh, say "No," Lung Chao! for they must look like This, be like This!

The keeper of the smoking-den stared. "Why, is that you, daughter of the foreigner? How tall you have grown! No, I know not where your parents are. Will you come in and soothe yourself with the delicious Smoke?"

Another head turned slowly—one with black coarse tails of hair strung with colored rings, which contrasted curiously with the sleek conventional queues hanging snake-like from the shelf-beds of this place of evil. It may have been that of the Turkestan trader who had bought her once; it might not. But with a shriek the girl dropped the curtain and fled, in imagination hearing behind her the padding steps of a pursuer.

Repentance is no less sincere because it needs the stimulus of circumstance. Tannhauser did not feel remorse until he was found out; nor Peter until his Lord looked on him. Candace, the pride of the mission, the example to juniors, sobbed as she ran, with awful nightmare haste, back in the direction of the European city. She was glad the hot streets burned her poor feet, so blistered already with running. What did not such a sinner deserve?

She knew in her heart—and found it: A great vacant hole in the row of shipping, a patch of seething umber water in its place, and, far, far on the horizon, a smoke-funnel growing fainter, a whistle dying in the air.

"There was a foreign woman came down the gang-plank when the bell rang, weeping and showing great loss of face, wringing her hands and calling an un-

couth name," reported a bystander she questioned. "Was it yours?"

Candace made no answer. With loss of face greater than Emma's, she had thrown herself down, shrieking and moaning, for all to hear. The significance of the action can only be comprehended by those who know that savage stoic Chinese pride, greater than the Castilian's, equal only to the Indian's, which holds emotion a crime. Had it been a Chinese boy upon whose vitals the stolen fox preyed, he not only would have borne it without a sign, but the story itself would never have leaked out. By her sudden abandonment to frantic grief, Candace cut loose—and somehow realized the cutting—from China.

She could not, however, long lie there shrieking and moaning, an obstruction to traffic and a target for questions. The thoroughly unnerved Emma, whatever the alarm and grief in her heart, would seize, she knew, the connection for America and set sail without her. Two weeks were to be lived through before Candace could follow her; and how, separated from her purse-bearer, was she even to buy the ticket—Candace, without a single cash strung about her neck!

The daughter of Franklin Roberts had learned resourcefulness in a hard school. Her heart beat against a hard little lump in a tiny bag—Winifred's wedding-ring, sent as a token of love and appeal to Michael Traquair. Never mind; without sacrificing it, she could not reach Mr. Traquair with the still more vital messages on her lips.

The ring was an odd thing—strange and yet precious, like the two beings whom it had linked. Set deep

inside, where no one could see them, were five stones—three diamonds and two rubies, which sparkled there to some purpose to-day, when she drove a by no means bad bargain for them in a pawn-shop, in whose grinning proprietor she refused to recognize a compatriot.

She now thought of herself altogether as an American lady. During the weeks which elapsed before she could take the steamer for America, she almost starved herself in her mean little room, so as not to be obliged to travel in the steerage. And the end of the fortnight found her embarked on the boundless Pacific for her father's country, looking out on its malachite waters as calm as they, as sure of finding Michael Traquair as the Turkish mother of A'Becket was of the efficacy of her magic formula—"Gilbert—England!"

Women both with and without daughters of their own were good to her on the way over. They could scarcely comprehend or believe her story, but they showed her the beautiful pathetic kindness of the older woman to the younger—the sad eagerness to wall her in from the hurt of the world, the wistful instinctive relinquishment to her of first place in its pleasures. But there was a woman in the steerage who disapproved.

"Behold the beastly one, consorting with foreigners huge in foot like herself!" she yelled shrilly from below the gallery-rail on which the girl had leant. "Without parents, without husband, shamelessly talking to all men. Lah! cah! gr-r-r! Turn away your eyes, my grandsons; and you, beastly also, keep quiet," violently, to a ship's officer who was trying to silence her.

"The big-foot girl!" at the same moment shrieked

one of the young men with her, who had obeyed her with about the usual docility displayed by youth when told to avert its eyes. "Oh," rapturously, "it has been so long since I saw her! Where were you, big-foot girl?"

He was dragged from the railing, which he and the old woman were both attempting to climb, though from different motives, but not before Candace had recognized her old neighbor at Wuhu, Lin, the son of Hu Sing, who had during sundry escapes from the grandmaternal apron-strings been enabled to do her many an awkward kindness, before the Roberts family drifted down-stream to Shanghai. Later in the day, making another such escape, he came to the railing, and shouted his subsequent history up to her. Hu Sing was now dead—"the Smoke, you know," explained Hu Lin, stolidly; and with the small remnant of their wrecked patrimony, he and his younger brother and grandmother were emigrating to America to engage in a business venture there.

"There is a law, I know," he added, in a voice considerably reduced in volume, "but we are going as the family of Charlie Lee, a wealthy laundryman of San Francisco, whose return papers we have purchased."

"That is wrong," said Candace, uncompromisingly.

Hu Lin started to shrug his shoulders, but instead burst into a bellow of pain. His queue had been violently jerked.

"Toad, desist!" burst in detonating syllables like a cannon report from Chin Loo. "It is defilement to glance at such a female! Cah! g-r-r!"

Nevertheless, since conversation with such a female seemed to afford Hu Lin the intensest joy his young life had known, it is superfluous to say that he found numer-

ous opportunities to so indulge himself before the expiration of the voyage. And when the shores of America were at last sighted, a terrific hubbub was heard in the steerage, a deafening explosion of remonstrance:

"Lah! cah! oh, vilest! most serpent-like of toads! most toad-like of serpents! G-r-r! release my hands! Let me tear and skin him alive before he escapes!"

For Hu Lin, as the bumping of the ship against the wharf started the disintegration of the carefully classed-off crowd of humanity on its decks, was climbing desperately up the dividing railing.

"I am going with you," he gasped to Candace. "You will need men to go back with you into China, and I will be one of them."

"But how can you?" asked Candace, as before, while the gigantic despair of Chin Loo, expressed in wails and curses, nearly rent the ship in twain.

"Murderer!" she shrieked. "Deserter of age! Give him to me, his grandmother!"

"*She* will be all right," said her relative, eagerly. His usually dull eye rather sparkled, as with anticipation of freedom. "My brother will take care of her, and both will be gainers, for I have surrendered my share of the patrimony. I go with you."

"Very well," said Candace, with cruel carelessness. Then she herself shrieked, as shrilly almost as Chin Loo, and ran suddenly forward, forgetting her follower. For out of the bewildering aggregation of foreign faces on the side of the gang-plank, was one which broke into lines of relief and excitement at the sight of her.

"She's come!" shouted Emma, and rapturously rushed forward.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BROKEN CIRCUIT.

> "Whither leads the path
> To ampler fates that leads?
> Not down through flowery meads
> To reap an aftermath
> Of youth's vainglorious weeds."

"I CAN'T even spell his name," said Mrs. Van Sant, aggrievedly, "much less follow his tactics."

"Whose name?" asked Michael Traquair, rousing himself. She noticed that he had to rouse, and frowned anxiously. She was intensely fond of him. "Whose tactics?"

"That man's with the Mac in his name. He wasn't Irish, but I always think of him as so. He is the only person who could successfully cope with Grannie. *I* can't, I am sure. She just sits back and sees through me, all the time pretending to be so simple and transparent herself. The other day, when I was trying to bring your case, as tactfully as I could, into the conversation, she interrupted me to ask, with that wistful, yearning, far-away look in her eyes, if I supposed you could use your influence with the Foreign Office to get her oldest grandson a berth somewhere. I bring you in *constantly*, Michael. I dwell on your ability, your long service in the Office, and your hope that Winifred might marry you if you got an appointment as ambassador to some

place sufficiently wild and naked. She hears of you night and day, but it doesn't seem to affect her attitude toward you."

"It should, I'm sure," said Traquair, in a tone unlike him.

Mrs. Van Sant stared at him with the dumbfounded look of a nurse who finds a changeling in the cradle. "Are *you* going to grow different, too?" she asked, involuntarily. "All the nice men do, but I thought you would be an exception."

"There are no exceptions," said Traquair, rousing himself still more. "Even women change. They grow nicer all the time."

His hostess gave him a look he luckily could not read. It is well men do not know how often women are moved to hug them, or this world would be even harder to walk straight in.

Yet she was not wholly satisfied. For a year past, Michael Traquair and Michael Traquair's friends had been uncomfortably aware that something was the matter with him. Only one of those little, rasping ailments of the spirit which a man can take down to his desk and up to his club, like a dyspepsia or a stiff neck. The disagreeable man has it, and withdraws still closer into his shell or puts out fresh aggressive feelers of snappiness, unnoticed and unmourned. The "nice" man has it, the man we have all his life admired and quoted and counted on, and we are outraged. So-and-so is not *nearly* so sunny-tempered as he was, we lament; nor so quick to do a kindness; nor so settled in his religious convictions. If he is unwedded, we ask ourselves disconsolately if he, of all men, is going to degenerate into the commonplace

crusty bachelor. If we are married to him, we notice that he reads the paper more than ever. In a word, he is disappointing us. But how about himself?

"Great Scott, child, don't you suppose I know it?" Traquair had once burst out, when Lambert Love reproached him with irritability. "Do you think the man in the Contracting Chamber, with the mirrors narrowing on him every day, was a fool?"

"Of course he was. First to go into the chamber. Then not to smash the mirrors. I wasn't scolding you, Mikey dear. I'm at the cub stage myself. I cub, thou cubbest even more, we all cub together. You need a change."

It was odd that Mrs. Van Sant should repeat the same words to-day.

"I wish you *could* get another appointment," she sighed, maternally. "You need a change."

"Yes," said Traquair, very abruptly. "I do. I've been quietly running dry for thirty-six years. A man needs to sluice his life with fresh waters. You think I am spoiling, I know. Spoiling! Why, I feel my very soul rotting in me." No one had ever heard him talk like this. "You perceive I'm in the mood when a man enlists. But I'm past the enlisting age, though able-bodied and unmarried." He laughed cynically.

Again Mrs. Van Sant looked at him. They were sitting on the luxurious piazza of her pine-screened summer home on the slope of an of course fashionable mountain.

"Michael," she asked, quickly, "do you mean Winifred? Are you thinking of giving her up?"

"Yes," he answered, "I am."

The pine needles outside could almost have been heard falling on their beds of fragrant decay. The silence swelled with the thoughts forced into it, as a soap-bubble expands with the blower's breath, till it seemed heavy enough to break of itself.

"Can you think of any reason why I should not?" asked the man. "Does Winifred want me? call me? would she even endure me as a servant in her train? And if she loved me, would she live with me in Washington? and if she would live with me, on what should we live?"

Mrs. Van Sant shook her head. She shook it reluctantly, while she knew Winifred herself would have shaken it emphatically, while she remembered how often she had urged on Michael this self-same step. But women hate inconstancy more than inconsistency.

"It is true," she said, with a final effort, "that Winifred would never marry you until the last Apache Indian was murdered and the North Pole found and civilized. I feel for you, Michael, I always do; and I'll continue to sit at Grannie's feet and pour incense on her head, though it's very hard to do, and work more than ever to win her over to use her miserable influence she hasn't any right to possess, so that you may have a brilliant position to offer some other woman, if not Winifred."

"Don't," said Traquair, shrinking. Other people put our secret thoughts so coarsely. And the idea of any other woman than Winifred seemed so absurd. She was a cordial—vivifying, intoxicating, sparkling, seductive, and—out of reach. Other women were the empty glasses one might hold up and look through. "I

only said I was thinking of doing it. I would have to first learn how."

"When you begin to think of doing it you have half learned it," said Mrs. Van Sant, a little dryly. "And there are finishing lessons given. Chiefly by women. *I* don't blame you, Michael. The Wharton girls, now, are both of them charming, and the younger one very pretty. You can't possibly drive to the railroad station without passing their house."

After all, it was difficult to keep a little human nature out of her voice.

* * * * * * *

She was wholly right. The Wharton girls *were* charming, and the youngest very pretty, and Michael Traquair had known it a long time without its doing him any good. Nothing seemed to do him any good. Despite Mrs. Van Sant, he was still the same man, if there is such a thing as a same man, which may be doubted. But the boy's dream, which had so long kept him sweet-natured and content in a boy's place, had been suddenly interrupted by the bitter inevitable reckoning hour when

"Each man hears, as the twilight nears, to the beat of his dying heart,
The Devil drum on the darkened pane, 'You did it, but was it art?'"

Love laughed at him, Success would not call, Youth had her trunks packed and was kissing him good-by. An upheaval of some sort was imperatively necessary, and since he had nothing else to upheave, he was suddenly and savagely resolved to tear out the roots of the withered hope Winifred herself had cropped to the ground. And if he could find a rose to plant in its stead, he would do it.

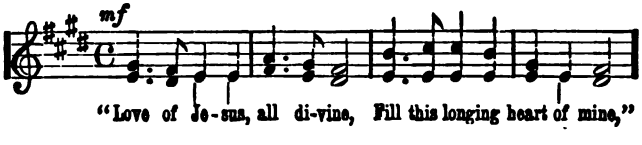
He stopped at the Wharton house. He dined and stayed late at the Wharton house. It was nearly midnight when his train pulled into Washington. Outside the house in which his bachelor apartments were situated, a small knot of street spectators, faintly distinguishable under a street lamp, was gathered. They were shabby (somehow street spectators always are) and, after all, they were gathered not to see but to hear, with ears cocked and heads tipped back.

"'S a woman," said a member of that sex, positively.

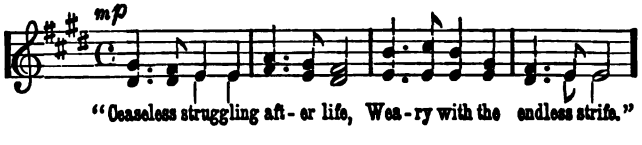
"I seed a feller at the winder," piped a bootblack.

"Hush, it's beginning again," admonished a massive matron in check apron and a man's carpet-slippers.

Traquair, whose entrance they were completely blocking, paused in astonishment and listened too. From a window overhead, open to the summer night, floated a woman's voice, and the singular part was that the window was his own. It was a voice that made one think of other musical instruments. It had the almost startling resonance of the French horn, the tremolo of the violin, "sweet as first love, and wild with all regret."



the melting cadences came dropping tenderly down, to an air which made Traquair start.



The Scotsman plunged up two flights of stairs, two steps at a time. Lambert Love had a key to his rooms, but it had never occurred to him that the boy would bring any one else in.

"Whom have you in here?" he demanded, flinging open the door, and peering into the unlighted chamber.

"Only me and myself and Lambert Love. It was lonely without you, Mikey."

"Never mind about that. Who sang?"

"The same. Didn't you know I was the negro Patti? You learn a lot of rousing stuff at the Salvation Army, Mikey. How's this?" dropping down on the piano in the dark and singing, with the same exhaustion of the art of expression, the same grave sweet long-dwelling pathos in each syllable:

> "The devil and I, we can't agree,
> Never a bit at all"—

finishing in the cracked false voice Traquair knew best.

It jarred every foundation-stone of his host's being. "Do hush!" he commanded. "Have you no reverence for anything?"

"Completely out at present," said Lambert. "Tell you what, though, I've a royal stock of curiosity. There's a letter from the London place, with a whacking big seal—"

Women who were like empty wine-glasses instantly fell broken on the floor of Traquair's heart in the one agitated leap it gave. She who was the golden cordial swam alluringly before his eyes in the dark.

"Quick, make a light, Lambert, my boy!" he ordered,

hoarsely. "It may mean a change of appointment, and that may mean Winifred."

The electric button was too far away. One agitated hand—the boy's—held a match, while another—the man's—broke seal and envelope and unfolded the letter.

"But it doesn't," said the reader, quietly. He sat down.

Lambert lit a match for himself, and tried to stumble through the unfamiliar ceremonious phraseology.

"'Do herewith order and appoint you,'" he read out, in snatches, "'to represent her Britannic Majesty'—m'm—'during the'—what's that word?—something-or-other—'of the present Ambassador at the court of'—oh, Mikey, *Belgium!*"

"The gods laugh," commented Traquair, grimly.

"Laugh? they snort!" said the boy, indignantly. "Win—*she* would never go there, would she?"

He shook his head. So this was the malice of Grannie. One of the smallest and stupidest of Europe's toy kingdoms; a petty little world, sluggish and sodden with conventions—he tried to imagine *her* there, with her truant curls, her bold boyish eyes to which Kings and Kaffirs were alike only men, her impatience of roofs and walls.

Lambert read his thoughts. "You could as soon coax a gazelle into a hen-coop," he said, sadly. "She wouldn't fit in. Other girls would, though," coming nearer. "Lots of lovely girls in Washington, Mikey—and even in Belgium. I really counsel you as a—as a brat, I suppose you think—to give her up. You know very well you don't care for her as you did. The circuit's broken. 'How do I know?' I don't

know how, but I know I do know. The circuit's broken."

"You little fool!" said Traquair, more rudely than he had been ever known to speak. So everything was to be the same in his heart—plus the hurt of the fragments of the broken wine-glasses.

Heaviness may endure for a night, but common-sense cometh in the morning. At thirty-six one cannot escape a slight accretion of this quality, however earnestly he may long to be a fool with the complete and joyous abandon of youth. Traquair could not help but remember that he had deliberately confessed to Winifred's own sister the advisability of breaking the circuit. He could not help but see that there never had really been any circuit. He had not lost Winifred—he had only lost a wholly unfounded hope of some day possessing her.

And then, in a little more time, he could not help but find it easy to whistle rather cheerily over his packing for Belgium; to regain his old sunny unirritable temper; to take little runs out to various country-houses where various attractive girls, not all Whartons, made him sweetly welcome. So passed the few weeks of inevitable delay, before papers could be filled out and formalities gone through, for him to hurry to present himself at the Foreign Office in London for fresh papers and formalities. He had his berth on an Atlantic steamer engaged, when one night Lambert, who as usual was sleeping on the lounge in his room, drowsily answered a knock at the door and brought him a telegram. "Longest I ever seed," said the messenger, who had to collect for it. The message ran:

"MR. QUATAIR: Having never seen your name written, don't know how to address you. Mrs. Blaize wants you right quick. That Tu-tze's got her and wants to marry her. I am her maid, you know. Please excuse my using so many words, as you'll have to pay for this, my money being short. Candace—that's her other maid—has maps of the route and will guide you back, if she isn't dead. She missed the steamer at Shanghai, and I don't know what to think; but she's got New-England blood in her, so I guess will take the next one. Bring all the canned stuff and money to buy food you can, as they're afraid of a famine in those parts. Am I using too many words? And don't tell any Government on the Tu-tze, as, aside from marriage, she likes him and the people, and don't want 'em disturbed. Full particulars when you see EMMA MALVINA GUTHRIE."

The telegram, which was dated from a San Francisco hotel, to whose operator the writer had handed it with a stern "No remarks, young man," was tossed in the air, caught in two joyfully extended hands, and kissed where he guessed the words "Mrs. Blaize wants you" lay.

"Help me into my clothes, Lambert, dearest boy," gasped Traquair. "Go down and get me a telegraph blank, and direct to the Foreign Office, London—no, not yet. Help me instead to think of some one who will furnish me money to get to the borders of Tibet and ransom Winifred. She wants me, Lambert!"

"Are you going there?" asked Lambert.

"Going? as quickly as I can. I'm off now to waken your father and ask him if he wants to accompany me on the instant's notice."

"And what's to become of Belgium? and of Michael Traquair, after he disobeys orders from headquarters? The chance of your lifetime, Mikey!"

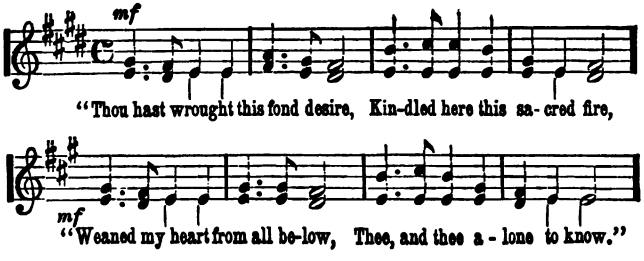
"Let them go," cried Traquair, who was already in his coat. "Let everything go."

"Very well. Then I go too," and he hurried downstairs after the flying Scotchman.

"Idiot! You've got to stay and be educated, if that's possible.

Winifred was the thought that whirred in Michael Traquair's brain as he dashed through the midnight streets with the blindness of joy. She longed for him, sent for him, leaned on him across two continents and an ocean—his girl, his lady, for whom he had tossed up a future in the air with her message. She was in danger—but hope stopped his groan half-way. He could rescue her. Nothing should prevail to separate them, not even the laughing gods, who had imagined they had broken the circuit.

By the way, what of that broken circuit, wise Lambert, who know as little of love as of electricity? who, catching up to him at that moment, raised his voice in one of those sudden astonishing bursts of song—loud and strong and liquidly sweet as a woman's, with the innocent clearness of a boy's that never has changed:



CHAPTER XV.

STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS.

"Up the steep, amid the wrath
And shock of deadly-hostile creeds."

"EMMA," whispered a soft distressed voice at the door of that lady's room at the San Francisco hotel. "Emma, please! before any one comes!"

"Land sakes, she don't know how to wear 'em, poor child!" hastily pulling her in through the door. "Why, you look all right. What's the matter?"

"My arms show," whispered Candace. They were blushing burnt sienna in her elbow-sleeves of sheer lawn. "And these stockings. Did you know they had holes in them?"

"A'ready?" ejaculated the amazed Emma, glancing floorward. "Why, they're open-work, child. Made that way on purpose."

"But my skin shows! Everything shows: my neck, and ankles, and even my waist, for there's something to pull it in tight there, and I don't think it's nice. If they called me 'big-foot' in China, what will they call me here in this short dress?"

"If they call you a goose they won't be far out," said Emma, severely. "Young girls of your age don't wear long skirts here. You act as if you never saw

civilized clothes before, and you calling yourself an American and a Christian."

"They did dress this way in Shanghai," said poor Candace, "but the Chinese told me that all foreign women were bad. I did not believe that was true, but I thought those in Shanghai were. The missionaries dressed modestly, like Chinese women, and so did you and Mrs. Blaize. How could I stand before any man, without even sleeves that would hide my hands?"

Emma struggled with a spasm of justifiable irritation. She had with infinite care and pleasure selected that gown, and Michael Traquair had cheerfully paid for it, simply because Candace had expressed a longing to visit a real American church, with the Christian service read in English, which "must sound so odd!" she thought. Then, too, "She must have proper clothes to wear over on the steamer," said Michael of his youthful guide, at whom, truth to tell, he had scarcely glanced, save to notice that she wore improper—otherwise unfamiliar—clothes. And there was little time to lose, for the Orient-bound steamer left on Monday. Candace's American experiences would be brief.

When the proper clothes had been bought, Emma made an announcement.

"I'm going to give Candace a treat," she said. "She's come out of a hard time, and she's going into a hard time, and I'll give her something she can remember all her life. I'll take her to the theayter, at my expense."

"But in China the theatre is free!" Candace had interrupted, in astonishment.

"I ain't gone more'n four or five times in my own

ixistence," Emma continued, "what with living in Essex, and all. The folks there would think it awful trifling to draw money out of the bank to go to Boston theayters with. If Candace ain't been raised the same way, I'll certainly take her."

"If Candace will—not—go—will—you—take—the—chamber-maid?" It was Professor Love, in his First-Primerest manner. "Doubtless—she—has—few relaxations."

"I would if she wasn't a Chinaman," retorted Emma, with a sense of quaking exultation at giving "sauce" to a "professor," one of the sacred class to whom the descendants of the Puritans have transferred their ancient superstitious reverence for the minister of God's mysteries.

"I've lost all my hankering to see 'The King of the Opium Ring,'" she confided to Traquair, as she waited at the hour of the performance for the reluctant Candace, who stood transfixed in her open-work stockings on the landing above. "But I don't mind sitting with her through anything else. I chose this piece because the paper called it a problem play, and I'm resolved to find out what that means, once for all.—Candace Roberts! go right back and put that where it came from!"

For the crimson Candace had stolen in, her elbow-sleeved arms rolled tightly in a gray Shetland shawl. Emma, who had not been reared where girls are taught to hide even their finger-tips in their flowing sleeves, pounced on it like a hawk. "Bought with my own money, not an hour ago, for my brother's wife in Essex!" she commented. "And look now at the wrinkles. You

stop being ashamed of the arms the Lord gave you, Candace Roberts, and put on that pretty hat and come on."

Candace had never worn a hat. The so-called feminine tradition is a reflection of masculine notions, and the Chinese man's notion of a large flower-flaunting disk of straw on a woman's head is exactly what the American man's would be of a banner borne in her hand, with the legend "Behold me!" But she donned it without a word. She would not lose face before two men. And on the street people did not look at her, and in the theatre she looked at other people.

"But this is worse than mine!" she whispered, with dilating eyes and impolitely pointing finger, which Emma sharply pulled down, for a lady seated in the next row but one. "Oh, much worse, for her neck and sleeve are *all* little holes!"

"Well, you don't want to be worst, do you?"

"But this is dreadful! Some have no covering on their necks at all. In China the very poorest do not dress so."

"Well, it ain't the poorest that do it here. For pity's sake sit down, Candace."

"But, Emma, look at that woman in a part of a black dress. You can see"—and she became so specific that the slowly blushing Emma bade her see and speak less. "'Tain't fitting in a young girl," she admonished.

"I don't call it fitting to have things around that people mustn't look at," retorted Candace, who also had New-England spunk. To Emma's relief, the first scrape of the violin interrupted further conversation, and she sat waiting for the curtain to rise, and nervously

hoping nothing behind it would shock her youthful charge.

In her heart of hearts she knew very well that there was a chance of it. Wonderful is the desperate simplicity, the strenuous innocence, of the right hand when it has determined to ignore the proceedings of the left hand. Emma had not lived fifty years without acquiring the woman's sixth sense, and while she did not know exactly what to look for in a problem play, that was precisely why she went. As for Candace, she argued, the child would merely take in the fancy dressing and the repartee, and see no further. But when the performance had fairly started, it was the dressing and the repartee which she wished could be eliminated, for the sake of Candace and of peace.

"What does that mean?" the young girl would ask, slowly, and with deadly clearness, while heads turned to listen. "Isn't it what they call love-making?"

"Yes, I s'pose so."

"But how can it be?"

"Hey?"

"I thought they were both married," and Candace's puzzled eyes returned to the programme to scan the cast. "They are, too!"

"Well," said Emma, vaguely. To tell the truth, her own eyes wore a slightly startled expression. It was good, she felt, that no one else from Essex, Massachusetts, was in the audience to see her. "I guess it all comes out all right and moral at the end."

"But how can it? He has kissed her—I just saw it. Do not people ever rise and rebuke these things when they see them, even in plays?"

"Mercy, no!" holding the arm of the young censor in a tight grip. "It *is* kind o' queer, but it's kind o' interestin' too, and I think it's our duty, in kindness and fellow-feelin' for the man that wrote the play, Candace, and the folks performin' it, to stay and see if it don't explain itself at the last."

"I think they are all very bad and shameless people," was the only reply from her uncompromising junior.

Emma knew it was but the beginning of the end. Candace's comprehension of her father's language was perfect, and the inuendoes of that play were adapted even to youth. It is an automatic alarm, that sixth sense. In a moment something occurred on the stage which touched the wire, and all the excited bells were ringing confusedly in Candace's brain without her knowledge of why they rang. The white shoulders about her, some of them become a little less white, moved uncomfortably; an atmosphere of disapproval, impalpable and dampening as a mist, rose chilly to the stage, and the manager hastily resolved to withdraw the offending feature the next night. But only Candace stood up, weak and shaking at the knees, but with splendid angry eyes, to ask, quite aloud:

"I thought you were good? Why did you bring me here?"

"Of course, there was nothing but to go out," said Emma afterward to Traquair. "It seems a sort of pity, before you've had your money's worth, but maybe I'd had it after all. I guess they call 'em problem plays because they don't know how much folks will stand before they get up and leave. I do hope there won't be anything to displease her in that church to-morrow."

When the three of them—Traquair, Emma, and Candace—descended the hotel stairway at church-time the next day, they found Professor Love waiting for them in all the agony of a man's best.

"Why, are *you* going?" asked the Scotchman.

Candace looked from him to Professor Love as she had been wont to look from Emma to Mrs. Blaize. "Does not every one go to church in Christian countries?" she asked.

"Not every one," replied Traquair, gently.

"But streams of people have passed my window. Where are they going?"

"To the shops," answered Emma, reluctantly, "and the theayters, I s'pose. They all seem to be open here Sundays. You mustn't judge America by the West, Candace. It ain't exactly America. You come to New England, and you'll see."

Candace did not reply. They were all becoming dreadfully afraid of her. Traquair started quite nervously at the next question she did ask, on the way to church. She was sedately walking with him, while the Professor moved majestically ahead with the impressed Emma. "Will he preach?" she asked.

"Who, my child?"

"That reverend clergyman, your friend."

There was no mistaking the stately figure at which her finger pointed. Traquair, choking a little, shook his head. Truth to tell, he would have been better pleased had the Professor joined the throng of Sabbath-breakers. The theatre seemed to his Scotch Presbyterian spirit an innocent Sunday diversion compared with the "calm, cold, confounded inspection," as he

restively termed it, of souls in more or less deadly earnest at their devotions, that the Professor might stick the scientific pin through them as "Exhibit A" for a book on "The Myth of the Supreme Being."

And unluckily it happened to be a missionary sermon. Candace behaved as beseemed a missionary's daughter, but the apologists for civilization helplessly watched her bright implacable eyes taking in the empty places in benches and empty benches in places about her. Professor Love's face was, however, a study. One did not look for such velocity in expression from a person so slow in speech and movement. He had with him a little stub of a pencil, with which he wrote volumes of dissent without touching it to paper. He twirled it nervously from finger to finger in a manner which deeply interested sundry disengaged small boys in his vicinity, when the speaker's sentence was long and involved, and he waiting to ascertain what it was with which he disagreed. He tapped his nails with it fiercely when "our duty to the benighted" was dwelt on. He ran it rapidly through his hair, as though making notes directly on the cerebrum, when the misery of "the people that hath no God" was depicted.

As for Candace, she sang sedately with the rest of the congregation,

> "O send to the heathen
> The life-giving Word,"–

dropping into the little plush bag the coins which Traquair slipped into her slim fingers. And she asked only one question:

"Are there missionaries in America, too?"

"Plenty of 'em," said Emma, warmly.

"Oh, then it is all right. I did not know there were plenty,—and was thinking."

* * * * * * *

Acting on the counsel contained in Winifred's message, Michael Traquair while waiting for the appearance of Candace had chartered a small sailing-vessel, loaded it with flour and tinned goods, and sent it on ahead of him to Shanghai. How he was to transport its cargo across China he did not know. He only knew Winifred had called him. With faith almost as implicit and ignorance almost as vast as Candace's in her quest of him, he was going in search of his lady. She had called him. Had he cared nothing for her, this fact would still have touched him deeply. He thrilled to the honor accorded him, as generous natures always do. "Whence is this to me?" asked the exultant Elisabeth, where the fretful Martha would have seen only a disturbing visitor in the mother of her Lord.

In one important point he was well prepared. A wealthy friend of Professor Love's, one of the providentially pliable persons who back wild schemes of exploration, had advanced a sum of money sufficient to cover all conceivable expenses, including Winifred's ransom, be it demanded in American dollars, British pounds, Indian rupees, or Chinese shoes of silver. And he had Professor Love for companion, and Candace for guide. And the girl had him for guardian. He must not forget that. He hastily and perfunctorily sought her out, after they had returned from the service, and found her sitting on the one grim green iron bench of a small balcony attached to their suite of rooms at the hotel, overlooking the sea.

One never recognizes profiles. This one had a fine smooth high forehead, a chin and neck rich in all the tender melting undulations of youth, and the pink-and-olive beauty of the cheek which takes the breath away. The upward trend of the black eyebrow, the downward one of the long straight lashes (for she had closed her eyes) was so slight as to be practically imperceptible, and it was by the dark hair, brushed back from the brow in the unrelenting line which only youth can bear, and looped low on the neck in the braid which Emma insisted all daughters of America should wear, that he first recognized Candace.

The girl was not crying. But her expression recalled to him a picture in a story-book of his little-boy days. It was Hans Andersen's little flax-haired maiden, who in the crude wood-cut stood looking up into a tree with clasped hands and exactly Candace's expression of supreme resignation. Cruel brothers had set her poor doll up on a high branch, prey to hobgoblins and all the Ugly Things of the night. "These were the troubles of life," says Andersen, immortally, "of which she had heard!"

Traquair's conscience stabbed him savagely. Taking the place at her side with what the exasperating Lambert called his "family-doctor air," he vainly tried to draw her out. The Mongolian and the New-England inheritances within Candace, which so often rent her being in their conflicts, were in perfect accord as to the criminality of displaying emotion. She answered his kindly questions as to the well-being of soul and body respectfully, modestly, intelligently—and that was all.

"Game little creature!" he thought, retiring baffled.

"She's horribly unhappy, but she's not going to cry on the first coat-sleeve that's offered her."

She did not even cry over Emma, when the morning farewell came, though that lady, with many mournful apologies to the Bunker-Hill stock, dissolved.

"I w-w-won't ask you to stay behind," she quavered, between moist kisses. "But don't let the Nancies harm her, Mr. Pratair, nor the Tu-tze marry her. He seems to be so dreadful set on marryin' his betters."

Traquair promised all things. "And you," he added, "whom are you going to marry?" For he had heard of the three men in Essex.

"I d'no as it's anybody. I'll own that when I was out on the Yang-tze with junks splintering around me, or shut up in that awful mouldy old tower, I felt it was a warnin' to marry any respectable white man that wouldn't so much as let you go visit your sister. But now I'm out of it, I d'no. There's things you're crazy to sample once, and then you're content to stop with 'em. China and problem plays, for instance; and I ain't sure about not including matrimony. Mr. Trapair, you *will* take care of Candace?"

"Yes, yes," he called, soothingly, over the gulf of waters which separated them in a moment, with the abrupt up-pulling of the gang-plank.

"Now, Candace, what is it?" he asked, when the time came, in his judgment, to ask it. This was not until they had been for some hours out on the gigantic Pacific steamer which they took at Vancouver for Japan. Every moment previous had been spent poring over maps, concocting plans, arranging itineraries, with the help of the girl with the braid half-way down her

back, who had twice crossed China, and who took dignified part at the daily council of ways and means, very much like a young Victoria at her first cabinet meeting, or a Joan of Arc conferring with bearded warriors. But Traquair, learning by bits and snatches more and more of her forlorn little life-story, felt he would rather for her own sake she had giggled, chattered, been useless to them.

"Are you homesick?" he asked to-day.

"What home have I to be sick for?" she retorted, quickly.

"Your parents—" he began.

Something—not a tear—that came into her eyes was what stopped him. "There is a way I feel about my parents," she said, in a low voice full of tension. "It is a strange way." She paused. "I do not yet know you well enough to talk to you about it," she said, simply.

"I wish we could have left you in America!" exclaimed Traquair, involuntarily.

Candace shook her head. "Everything is very strange in America," she said, with the positiveness of a person who has spent several days in one of its cities. She spoke as though he had made America.

"But you are now returning to China."

"Everything there is strange, too. I do not belong there. I do not belong anywhere!" she cried, suddenly choking up. She knew him better now than a moment ago. "In China they mocked me, called me foreigner, 'big-foot,' and 'straight-eyes.' Yet I knew I was Chinese. In America I thought all would be right, for I knew I was American. But there too all is puzzle.

I shock you and you shock me. Perhaps my feet are too small. But your churches are too big to hold the people, and yet they spend money on missionaries for other countries, instead of buying clothes to cover themselves up to the necks. I do not understand."

"Aïe! aïe!" thought Traquair. "These are the troubles of life, my girl!"

His expression was so compassionate that her young soul nestled closer.

"Did you ever feel so?" she asked. "Did you ever feel that a great bubble of pain was slowly swelling in your body, choking you so that you could not speak? and that if you breathed deeply, it would break? So have I felt ever since I—smelt the Foreign Smoke in my parents' cabin. In the mission I did not feel it. One never goes back to the mission, does one?"

"*You* shall, if Mrs. Blaize is willing," promised Traquair, impetuously. "Do you not now see how well it is that we spare China some of our missionaries, to make happy memories for young girls? And the spirit which sends out the missionaries, Candace, is the same one which fills the church pews which *are* filled."

"Is it really?"

"Surely. And, anyhow, it does the Anglo-Saxon people less harm to stay away from church than it does others," he finished, right Britishly. "As to clothes, they are wholly a matter of custom. That's one of the few things in this fine old conundrum of a world which you will come to comprehend. For the rest, eat, drink, and be merry, Candace; for to-morrow we—understand."

"Do we really?" she asked, innocently. Already she looked brighter.

"Sympathy is queer stuff," mused Traquair, as he groped his way helplessly about his dark state-room. "It can make you temporarily forget all about the doll up the tree."

His chief annoyance at not finding the lighting button was the fear that in stumbling about he might disturb his room-mate. Both he and the Professor had been obliged to take but half of a state-room, the upper berth in his case having been secured by a man who, the steward said, had retired before him. It was somewhat startling, therefore, upon parting the curtains of the lower one, to see a motionless form outstretched thereon. The first comer had undoubtedly been first served. Traquair had heard of such things. On shipboard they were considered good jokes.

"Holloa!" he said, without effect. "Pardon me," with a mild poke, equally ineffective. He could, of course, creep into the upper berth without making a fuss. But your Briton loves his right of way, and the man suddenly began to snore. It was a rather insolent snore, and Traquair would not have it in his bed. "This is my berth," he said, suavely. "You're quite awake enough to step out of it."

"Mikey," said the figure, solemnly and suddenly rising into a sitting posture, "do you remember once turning me out of your bed in Washington, your nice comfortable bed, and making me sleep on the lounge? *I've* never forgotten it. Be sure your sin will find you out."

He might have babbled on forever, for Michael Traquair could only clutch the curtains, and gasp, and look, and look and gasp again. "Lambert Love!" he finally breathed, weakly.

"Yes, dearest?"

"How did you get here?"

"On your expense bill, ma petite. Dropped in on old Wilson, told him I was to some extent my father's son, and explained that you had omitted buying my ticket. He was beautiful about it. Say, I'm afraid that dear old man will be done, some day."

"But you are supposed to be in college! What will your father say?"

"'Better a hundred years of Harvard than a cycle of Cathay.' That's a matter of opinion. Did you think, Pig, I was going to let you two have that gorgeous adventure all to yourselves, and I stay behind to miss examinations because of idiocy resulting from sunstroke contracted in search of a father? Win—Mrs. Blaize nursed me then. Do you think I have no gratitude toward her, or no natural feelings toward the only father of an only son, just because he has none for me?"

"Why do you harp on that absurd idea?" asked the elder man, reprovingly.

"Oh, you know very well I'm the victim of an unrequited attachment. He doesn't care enough about me to bat me over the head if I *don't* do him credit at college."

"It is a pity your mother died, boy. You need one."

"One!" disdainfully. "Why, it would take a whole Mothers' Meeting to satisfy me. Just watch and see what my dada doesn't say when he discovers me."

But Traquair slept too late the next morning for that spectacle. "You really missed a touching scene," observed the early-rising Lambert, making distracting dabs at his friend's person, to which he insisted he had

been appointed "vallot." "It would have drawn tears from a sponge. He was sitting reading his Bible—"

"Lambert!"

"Softly. I didn't say yours or mine. Every man to his own Bible. His was by some German—Haeckel, I believe. He kept the place open, and, I think, read with one eye while I explained myself. Nobody kissed me, not even the China girl. She's a corker, isn't she?"

"Oh, no. She is not able to cork *you*. Remember, Lambert, I will have no teasing or disrespect toward our—" He paused for a word.

"Lady of the Aroostook," supplied the other.

He knew it would make the Scotchman start. "By Jove! that is so! It *is* a rather unchaperoned arrangement." He looked troubled, while the boy chuckled heartlessly—and eventually took the complication to the Professor.

"I suppose," he admitted, reflectively, "the proprieties do not greatly matter anyhow, since we are going 'where there ain't no Ten Commandments.'"

"Then—there—will—be—a—thousand—proprieties," commented the Professor, gradually. "There always are. Proprieties are a sort of evaporated fruit of righteousness, scarcely to be detected from the fresh goods, and by many people preferred to them, as keeping better in a warm temperature."

"Just let Candace pass for *his* daughter," suggested Lambert, brilliantly. "She could pass for yours, Auntie, if you weren't an old maid."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE GYA LAM.

"Forever, forever,
With ceaseless endeavor,
Is Sisyphus rolling
His stone up the mountain;
While, immersed in the fountain,
Tantalus tastes not
The water which wastes not."

WHAT happened when they reached China was so surprising that Traquair, who had dreamed of confounding the determined gods, was himself confounded. All his book-knowledge and sociological study had not, as yet, robbed him of the conviction that to gain your end you need only be a Briton and have plenty of money—a conviction which, on the whole, has opened up the world. When they heard on the first day that the Yang-tze and its feeders were in flood, he did not see why Candace should turn pale as though their plans had received a death-blow.

"The floods will subside," he said, impatiently.

"But the people will not," she said, in a low voice. Her words were an echo of those of every one, native and foreign, with whom he had spoken. It was a bad time, they said, shaking their maddening heads, for foreigners to attempt to penetrate into the interior. For flood meant famine, and famine riot. Travel was

blocked, the unemployed mob dangerous, the secret societies arming.—"Oh, you do not know China as I do!" cried Candace, clasping her hands. "We can buy no food to take on to Somo, with which to ransom Mrs. Blaize. What we bring will be seized from us in the famine districts, and the Viceroys will be asleep." She was no longer the unversed child of the mission. "The rivers and canals will be full of wreckage to endanger our boat. And winter is coming on." Again she clasped her hands despairingly.

Traquair looked at her in wonder. Antæus-like, she had gained strength and poise ever since touching her native soil. She it was who knew, taught, advised, played the woman in every way—and here she was almost hysterical at the thought of a few snags in a canal. Ignoring her perturbation, he set about at once to secure his passport through the provinces. To his amazement, it was—not refused, but cleverly withheld, delayed, discussed, corresponded over, everything but given. Pushed into a corner, the Chinese authorities declared, with some show of reasonability, that they could not guarantee the safety of a foreigner in the far interior at such a troubled time.

"I don't ask for safety," said Traquair, through his interpreter. "All I ask is permission to proceed."

The authorities bowed, and requested time to consider. Candace grew paler than ever at the news. "They are passing on the word not to let us proceed," she said, with conviction.

Slowly, as precious day after day dragged by while the Mandarins considered, Michael Traquair, chafing, indignant, baffled, realized that he was facing the true

Great Wall of China. Long before the rearing of that famous and mighty barricade, long after its ruin, its spiritual counterpart—the impregnable stubbornness of implacable ignorance—kept and will keep the insider in, the outsider out. The lack of a passport was no small matter, he learned. Without it, every obstacle in this continent of intolerable delays would block the path to Winifred. The laughter of the gods he had thought to baffle sounded faintly in his ears. There was little doubt but that a leisurely correspondence with the Tsung-Li-Yamen at Pekin through the British Minister would eventually procure him his passport. But no one knew better than himself the slowness of diplomacy.

"'After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!'"

chanted Lambert. "I've told you what to do all along. Give up. You've done your best. The Foreign Office will run out to meet you rejoicing."

"I suppose you cannot realize that we are discussing ways and means of saving a woman's honor and happiness, and perhaps even life."

"On the contrary, I was about to remark that I myself will go on and save them, if you like. *I* haven't any career to lose, and never will have. I'm not like other people, and I know it."

Traquair looked him up and down. "So do I," he said. He unrolled a big sheet of paper. "This is what I intend doing," he said, simply.

It was a map of Asia, the same written spell that had charmed Winifred to her ruin. Across its wrinkled

face, from Ladakh on the extreme edge of pink India, to the mountain-furrows on orange China's border marked "Independent Tribes," ran a black ruled line. Bold and unbending as the British will, it bestrode green Tibet, all frowning with mountains, weltering with lakes, forbidding with deserts.

The Professor shook his head. "I thought you were practical, Traquair," he said.

"You were wrong," returned Traquair. "I'm—I'm" —he reddened.

"He's in love!" proclaimed Lambert, suddenly shooting up in his startling way and reaching out a long arm over the table to pat him on the shoulder, nearly felling him. Candace thrilled.—"Also bound to have his own way," he added, dryly.

The Professor spoke slowly. "Winter is coming," he said. "It has scarcely ever"—

"But I will do it," Traquair interrupted. "I will be less molested by the wild tribes than in summer, when the pilgrimages to L'hasa attract robbers. And it would be easier for me to die in the snows of the passes than to waste time here, feeling that a woman has trusted in me and been confounded. I don't expect you to follow me, of course."

"Oh, I will go," said the Professor, half absently. "There will be opportunities to study Lamaism at its centre, and—I have come thus far."

"What do you think of my dada?" asked Lambert in an undertone of Candace. "If only he cared a little, little bit for me, he'd be quite perfect."

* * * * * * *

Tibet the forbidden, the inhospitable, the well-nigh

impossible, was the last land Michael Traquair had ever expected to visit. It had never beckoned him as it had Winifred—irony of fate that he, not she, should be the one to cross its snowy passes and cheerless plateaux, if by God's mercy he was spared to cross them! Suddenly it had become the goal of his hopes; and one day, in the mordant chill of the early morning, their caravan left Leh in mountainous Ladakh for the Bodh country, as Tibet calls Tibet.

A simple statement, very laconically entered in the day-book of the methodical Michael, it represented incredible triumph of energy over obstacles. When your practical man embarks on a wild scheme, he does it in the most practical manner possible. Since it seemed madness for a party of inexperienced explorers to attempt to cross the Bodh country in winter, Michael Traquair put into it all the method for which he was celebrated. All that a man can learn of a country through books, bazaar-talk, and interviews with the few who know it, he learned in his furiously hurried journey from Calcutta to Ladakh. Candace was set to teaching the three white men and Lin all she herself had learned of the Tibetan language, with the further assistance of the Argoon guide he had secured. This personage had crossed Tibet twice, once as interpreter for a party of Mohammedan merchants from Turkestan, once with a foreign Sahib, who, he cheerfully mentioned, died of the hardships of the journey. With ineffable pride, and in decent English, Ba'ron repeated this Sahib's verbal recommendation of him as "the best liar in all Asia."

"Not worst liar, Sar," he explained. "Worst liar lie

to master. Best lie for master, to all but master. No cross Tibet without lie."

Many of Leh's inhabitants had crept out of their warm beds to gather in the square courtyard of the serai whence they took their departure, to shiver, to stare, to hinder, and to wonder why sahibs tried to enter the Bodh country. In a circle of protection around it, as though it were a land of treasure, the huge Himalayas clasp hands with the Snowies and the Kuen Lun and the Karakorums; while at their foot, in Ssamba, a pious living Buddha, the Chaberon Sa-Dcha-Fo, prays night and day with his disciples that the snow may continue to fall and seal their passes, for beyond the Himalayas all know there dwells a savage and cruel people, only waiting the melting of the snows to come and massacre all Tibet. No, visitors to the Bodh country are only welcomed by the wild chukpa tribes from the northeast, whose black tents are the wings of birds of prey.

Michael's men—a motley crowd, not picked, but coaxed, with promise of exorbitant reward, for the journey—were loading up the mules and ponies amid the usual Oriental racket. It was an imposing caravan, a mark for marauders, the leader of the forlorn hope very well knew. Lambert, plunging seasickly on his stocky little Ladakh pony, rode gasping up to the Scotchman, who stood up on his stirrups, shouting orders, waving back would-be camp followers, and distributing backsheesh among the lean children of the town. "I have just thought of something!" he cried.

"Bad time to think," answered Traquair, briefly. "Ba'ron! make them fasten that pony's load more securely."

"But, listen! Why in the world are we taking Candace? She cannot guide or help us here; and from all accounts, it is the sort of trip to kill a girl."

The other Ladakh pony nearly sat down on its haunches, while Traquair as angrily and suddenly pressed the spurs into his own soul as into its heaving flank. "And why in the world," he cried, with just indignation, "did you not think of this sooner? Halt, every one! we are not ready yet to go?"

Candace to the lover of Winifred Blaize had during the past months been an interesting study in docility. With a fascination like that of the young savant dabbling in the chemical elements so wonderfully subject to his control, he had said to her, at first experimentally, "Do this," for pure awesome delight in seeing her do it. The Argoon mule-drivers, whose inquisitive spirits were pestered with uncertainty as to whose wife she was, out of the three white men, said among themselves to-day: "She is his. She has angered him," and stood back as he dashed down the line to the end of the caravan, where he had stationed her between Lin, her devoted Chinese squire, and Professor Love.

"You must go back," he said to her, abruptly, clenching his hand lest it beat his own stupid head. How the dimples came with his coming, went with his words! "I don't want *your* blood on my hands," he said, almost snapped. "And you would be useless."

"Never yet was I that," returned Candace, proudly. She straightened up on her little black mule. "Are you perfect in Tibetan yet?" she asked, triumphantly. "These men, guide and all—how do you know they

will not desert you in the heart of Tibet? I will not go back. Where would you send me?"

"There are many girls' missions in India."

Candace shook her head. "I will go to no more missions!" she replied, in a low passionate voice. "You must always leave them, and the world is too different afterward. If you send me back I will follow, and probably come to my death sooner. I belong to Mrs. Blaize, and I promised to lead you to her. Till I reach her I belong to you."

Traquair remembered despairingly having read that the Chinese are an obstinate race. He turned and almost sullenly gave Ba'ron, the caravanbashi, the signal, and amid the wild whoops and shrieks of the left-behind portion of Leh, by far more excited than those who went forth, the caravan began slowly to move toward the unknown. It was fully a quarter of an hour before the gates of the serai—the known—shut with a portentous noise after the last man driving the last mule.

"The tangled web we weave" when once we enter into human relations, however slight! Now that it was too late to send Candace back, Traquair saw that her presence was a menace to the whole party's safety, as well as her own. There was nothing to do but keep her as close to his side as possible. Every day's march on the Gya Lam (China road) renewed this resolution; but most of all the day when Lin came to him with the question: "Are you the guardian of the big-foot girl?"

"I am the guardian of Miss Roberts, the young American lady—yes," returned Traquair, frowning.

"Have any steps been taken for giving her in marriage?" persisted the coolie, unabashed.

They were struggling up the Chang La, the first of the series of dangerous mountain passes, in one of which Ba'ron's Sahib had died. The men were gasping and groaning about him in the sickness of the mountain air and the steepness of the ascent.

"Go hold Miss Roberts firmly on her mule, Lin," said Traquair, abruptly.—"No," hastily, "I will do it myself. And ask no more questions about her marriage."

"I thought—" murmured Lin, wistfully. It was evident enough what he thought. "I have liked the big-foot girl so long," he finished, sadly.

The humanity in him came slowly to light while Traquair silently studied him, as the features of a man take shape if one gazes steadily on the lifeless-seeming face of the moon. The Scotchman too had liked a woman for long, so long! and in vain until now—and perhaps forever in vain. He suddenly pitied the yellow man, but kept Candace nearer his own side than ever.

There are two Tibets, as there are two of every semi-civilized country. Each has its danger for the traveler. The Tibet of the south has what wooded hills, what fields and gardens, what villages and monasteries, what prosperity and culture, are to be found within that hermit land. The towns of thriving Shigatz, and L'hasa, with its wonderful temples, its famed edifice of rams' horns, its cunning artificers in metal-work and weaving, its still more wonderfully constructed and corrupted system of political and priestly rule, lie to the south. Here food and shelter are most procurable—and here a thousand fierce spears to oppose every forward step, with an

organized and aggressive government back of them. More northerly lies the Tibet of the Chang—a desolate, treeless plain, swept by winds as fierce as the southern spears, and empty in winter of human life save that of the predatory tribes who descend from it on peaceful Mongol camps pitched too near the border.

The peril from them was obvious. But Traquair chose that route, or rather had it forced upon him through the circumstance that Ba'ron's Sahib—who died—had taken it, and the guide knew no other Gya Lam. So, steadily, day by day, but with agonizing slowness, an extraordinary prize for any roving chukpa band that might spy them on the plain, they struggled (there is no other word for Central Asian travel) westward, with little guide save a great hope, Traquair's compass, Ba'ron's rather hazy data, and the reluctant and usually lying statements of suspicious natives, who issued from the mud huts of the horrible childless villages to ask innumerable questions, but to answer those directed to them with the inevitable "*Ka cha ma she*"—"Don't understand."

The caravan was long—less long, however, with every march, for mules and ponies were knocked up with the hardships: the meagre winter fare of bhoussa (chopped straw), the thirst mocked by alluring sapphire lakes whose waters stung with salt, the exhausting ascents and descents, weighed down by maund on maund of grain and other supplies, tents, skins, sleeping bags of fur, and other baggage, in which rifles and ammunition played a not inconsiderable part. Hired transport was not always available to take the places of

these defaulters, for with every step into the interior, signs of habitation diminished.

At the head of the caravan rode, in addition to the Argoon guide and the faithful but melancholy Hu Lin, four Europeans, clad, men and girl alike, like natives in thick Kashmir-woven puttoo or woolen cloth and sheepskin coats, and huge pubboos or Tibetan boots which allowed of wearing several pairs of socks. The tallest man—for Lambert had actually overshot his own father—sang lustily through everything. His voice drowned the crackling underfoot of the frozen grass-blades of the bitter saline marshes; drowned the coarse cries of execration with which the mule-drivers urged on their weary beasts, sinking to the hocks in the snows of the perilous passes; rode triumphant on the mighty wind which tore tent-pegs from the foundations and beat faces black as could the tropic sun.

And for the first few weeks they did not travel alone. A mendicant lama, in woeful scarlet rags, limped into the camp one daybreak with a wooden begging-bowl.

"A spy," said Ba'ron, frowning. But Traquair had the bowl filled first with tsamba (ground parched barley, moistened and kneaded into dough), and, when he had emptied and licked it clean, with small coins for a new roof in the temple in far Sining. Candace's eyes grew rounder than the coins, and far larger and brighter.

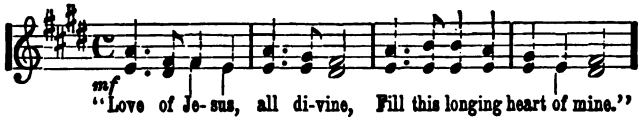
"Are you not a Christian?" she asked, sternly.

"No," said Lambert. "He's a Calvinist."

"Men serve God after different fashions, Candace," began the Calvinist, in conciliating tones.

"And the devil after the same good old one," interrupted the boy. "That's what they say in the Salva-

tion Army, at all events. Tuneful old place, that Army, Candace;" and his lark-like voice raised again the strain where he had dropped it:



"Stop it!" commanded Traquair, wincing.

"Oh!" said Candace, involuntarily. Her sweet slender pipe had been innocently mingling with the boy's rich notes. "At the mission they encouraged us to sing hymns. Is it something more that I cannot understand?"

Traquair put out a hand and gently pushed up the sheepskin hood which had fallen back from her head. It was no more than he would have done for any of the others. But it seemed more to do it for her. The hood touched soft young-girl hair, and the hair brushed young-girl cheeks, tender in curve and bloom, and it seemed almost as though he had touched them, to the shame of all chivalry.

Under the tan he reddened. Young-girlhood had hitherto been a sealed book to him. Had he only known it, many an innocent youthful heart, filled with adoration of his adoration of an unattainable Dulcinea, fanned into loyalty by his faithfulness, had for a while lain at his feet for the taking. But, absorbed in Winifred, he had unconsciously chosen for friendship and even notice only her contemporaries. He had forgotten that there was such an age as sixteen. Brought suddenly and forcibly into contact with its heart-breaking

sweetness, its fragrant simplicity, its intoxicating appeal to elder wisdom, he had—pushed up its sheepskin hood. When the perception of womanhood came to her, she would not now remember him as one who had earned no share in the terrible woman's sneer for the man.

"Candace," he said, very coldly, "you urge that mule too fast. We shall have another death."

She fell back abashed, Lin, who was almost irremovable from her side, keeping pace with her.

"Speaking of the Salvation Army," remarked the Professor, with his usual deliberation, "the Salvation Army, and all those kindred manifestations, are wonderfully interesting studies. To attend their—ah—assemblages in a spirit of flippancy, like Lambert's, is a sad mistake. Those—ah—excited supplications, and hysterical hymns, and possibly sincere statements of individuals under religious delusions, are all part of the emotional phenomena which I shall analyze in my book on 'The Myth of the Supreme Being.' It is a subject which should be discussed without heat—without h-e-a-t," joining his hands meditatively, and almost dragging out the four-lettered word into as many syllables.

"Then dad's the man to do it," said Lambert. It was curiously seldom that one heard the father and son address one another in the direct form.

"I think so," agreed the Professor, not glancing at him. "Few scientists are able to rid themselves of the survival of faith in the form of a grudge against the Deity for not existing. This darkens judgment and makes their brief for His non-existence valueless. Bitterness indicates that one cares; blasphemy connotes

faith. It is the 'Up, Lord, why sleepest thou?' spirit, which in its last analysis is abjectly believing. That too is highly instructive from a psychical standpoint, when studied without heat."

"Without heat, Professor," said Traquair, good-naturedly, "you are the cocksurest person I have met in thirty-six years, and you can no more persuade me that you are liberal than you can prove the unprovability of the unprovable. What, in the name of the exact sciences and the Continental Congress, can any one of you accurately charge against the Divine Consciousness of the Universe, save that you never met Him? You could not hang a man on negative evidence like that, let alone a God."

"He would execute Himself!" flashed the Professor.

The very muleteer behind him started, and craned his lean yellow neck to peer curiously into the great moon-face. For the Professor now was not speaking slowly, or without heat. "Shamed to have been so long time with us, and yet we have not known Him!" Some great harsh savage feeling rumbled in the unaccustomed deep of his tones. "If ever there had been a Divine helpless Consciousness in this universe, rest assured, Traquair (the boy isn't interested in these matters), the bitter prayers of outraged man must long ago have scourged him to a Divine death!"

Even while they looked at him, the tone, the expression faded, like the replacing of a mask. They had never heard him speak so before, they never heard him speak so again. "In my book on the Myth," he continued, in his usual slow serene manner, "I have demonstrated—"

"Mikey to the rescue!" cried Lambert, in piercing tones of distress. "For the love of goodness take up a collection! now that I have sung and dad preached. There's a strange man galloping up the line on a pony, anyhow; if he's a brigand, he'll attend to the collection."

He proved not to be a brigand, but the emissary of a mighty caravan of Tibetan merchants, returning to L'hasa, and keeping together for safety against chukpas. They had left Ladakh shortly after Traquair's caravan had started, and had sent a courier ahead to ask the foreigners to halt and confer with them as to the advisability of their joining company for as much of the way as possible.

Ba'ron, guide, teacher, steward, and caravanbashi in one, lived only in moments like these. Puffing, frowning, distilling an atmosphere of delicate disdain, as he had seen native judges do in Indian courts, he coldly surveyed the crown of the advance agent's matted black head, bent low before him with tongue run out.

"Who are your masters?" he austerely questioned. "In what business are they engaged—holy pilgrimage, righteous commerce, or abominable brigandage? On what pretext do they halt a party bound in great haste for L'hasa?"

"Are you the headman of the caravan?" asked the Tibetan, humbly, unwinding more tongue and bowing lower still.

"No, no more than you of yours, slave of the slaves of slaves. My masters do not communicate directly with underlings. State your masters' business in haste, for it is yet far to L'hasa."

"My headman too is bound for L'hasa, together with many merchants of lesser importance who seek the hem of his coat for protection. He, the Kushok, sends greeting to your masters, and asks who they are and whither bound, so that if both noble parties be agreed, two such large caravans may travel together instead of apart, for the sake of companionship and brotherhood, and also that brigands, beholding an army, may flee in confusion."

"It is a reasonable and frequent proposition," Ba'ron told his masters, who at his suggestion had remained aloof, as beseemed Europeans dealing with natives. (It is the native who most eagerly coaches the conqueror in this lesson.) Their knowledge of Tibetan was as yet too elementary for much of the conversation to be intelligible. "Let me," continued the guide, "wisely answer: 'My masters will wait a day for your headman to catch up with them. If the conference is auspicious, we will then deign to cast the mantle of our protection over your heads.' I told them you were natives of Ladakh, two merchants and a reverend priest, and must reach L'hasa quickly."

"But we do not want L'hasa!" cried Traquair, in consternation. "Our route lies far to the north. Nor would we be permitted within twenty miles of it. Fool! why do you tell such unnecessary lies?"

"I told some things that were the truth," said the aggrieved caravanbashi. "I said that before many days were past we would want fresh mules and ponies to bear our baggage, and would doubtless also desire to buy food and forage; and how can that be arranged without a con-

ference and tea-drinking? And if we say we wish the L'hasa road, there is nothing they will not do to help us to get elsewhere. No cross Tibet without lie. Do I not know, who guided a Sahib many marches on the Gya Lam? Sahib died."

CHAPTER XVII.

MAN IN THE RAW.

NEXT day the Kushok came.

A Kushok, the encyclopædic Ba'ron informed them, had once been an incarnate Buddha. In these degenerate days he was nearly any sort of man who rode, as this one did, under the red silk umbrella of state. At his side rode the inevitable lama. Behind him—

"Oh, such a circus!" groaned Lambert, in pure delight, peering out at them from the skin-lined Kabul tent in which the four Caucasians slept.

"Don't stare," admonished Traquair.

"If I want to pass for a native, I must," retorted the Professor's son. "Yaks, horses, mules, camels, sheep—I declare, Candace, it's a whole Noah's ark! And see 'em all swing round in sections under the different leaders, like parts of a machine or flanks of an army! *And* the fit of their sheepskins! Every fellow looks like a heap of crockery tied up in the mattress on moving day."

Strange, brilliant, apparently interminable, announced long since by the jingling of the bells on the yak's heads, the procession poured out of the defiles around dun hills dry as sandpaper. Red and white prayer-flags, on the horn of every beast and the prong of each rusty matchlock, flapped in the wind against the glitter-

ing sky with an audible rustle like leaves. Tent-baggage, household effects, merchandise, weighed down each animal, even the fat and filthy sheep carrying their quota. Wild, yet wary-eyed men, apparently one-armed, with complexions like ironing-wax, with wispy pig-tails whipping in the wind against curly-brimmed hats, led them, on foot or sitting crook-kneed on tiny toy-like L'hasa ponies, strong as steel. The missing arm was always thrust for warmth inside the big bag of a sheepskin coat, whence it could be withdrawn quick as lightning, if need arose for the straight swords, slung picturesquely crossways in their belts, with turquoise liberally studding the beautiful silver-work of the scabbards, or for the archaic-looking matchlocks with long prongs attached for rests.

The Kushok immediately sent his representative to summon the other travelers to his presence. Ba'ron moaned and clutched the air as though dying at the mere idea.

"That those who in their own land eat with kings and princes should be summoned by a mangy Tibetan to drink tea with him!" (of which latter amenity no mention had been made.) "Tell the Kushok that my masters are used to have inferiors come to them."

Back and forth from the two camps, pitched almost opposite to one another, merrily trudged their respective emissaries all day, carrying compromises or answers to compromises, negotiations or attempts at negotiations, for the momentous interview. Fatigue they knew not; in this sort of thing lies the Oriental's purest bliss. Not the Briton's, however—and Michael Traquair lost patience.

"We will move on without them, Ba'ron," he said.

"Our caravan is large enough to take care of itself, and these men may set the L'hasa authorities on our track to stop us."

"Your guide has thought of that, Sar," half closing his eyes. "It is most well that the Kushok should entertain you in his tent, and converse with you upon roads and other things Tibetan, and sell you supplies, so that neither he nor his men should be able to recall meeting any strangers on the road, if inquiry be made."

"I'll make a diplomat of that fellow," said Traquair, in admiration, "after he has brought us safely into China."

They eventually compromised upon making the visit to the Kushok's tent, as it was larger. Ba'ron would be both indispensable and impossible to get rid of. Nevertheless, Traquair spent about an hour nervously practicing his "Meisterschaft Tibetan," as Lambert impertinently termed it, learnt from Ba'ron and Candace, neither of them natives. The Professor was in truly piteous case. He had not learned to speak the tongue at all, though he could write it, in accordance with the curious law of languages which decrees that they shall be more easily picked up by children and the uneducated than by deeply learned savants. Lambert often speculated audibly as to what would become of his "dada" if ill fortune should separate him from the rest of the party, but gibed just as joyfully at Traquair's valiant attempt to converse with his muleteers unaided.

"'My daughters both speak French,'" he chanted, "'but they don't understand one another.'"

"For that, you stay at home," said his leader. "The Kushok doesn't want little boys."

"Pshaw," retorted Lambert, "you want some one to take care of Candace, anyhow."

The Kushok had camped near enough to play bean-bags with. But etiquette demanded a four-footed approach. Behind Traquair and Professor Love on their mules walked the caravanbashi and a muleteer, each laden with gifts—a can of saffron, a piece of cloth, a modern revolver, a watch, and some other European trinkets, and the inevitable khata, or silken scarf of greeting. The chief gift of all, a small bamboo cane with silver head, was carried in Traquair's hand, but hastily whisked out of it by Ba'ron as he dismounted at the Kushok's tent. The caravanbashi's face could not display pallor, on account of certain accretions, but it showed horror.

"You must never enter a Tatar tent stick in hand, Sar," he whispered, rapidly. "A thousand khatas could not undo that"—and ushered them, with a great fluttering of scarves, into the Kushok's tent.

It was indeed larger than theirs. A confused background of staring and whispering commonalty, shaggy and picturesque, stood or squatted in the far darkness which the fire of red-hot argols (animal droppings), the standard Tibetan fuel, did not illumine. The Kushok, seated on a mattress covered with scarlet cloth, on one side of the fire, and his inseparable spiritual director, seated on a similar dais on the other side, did not rise. Both were well-built, well-dressed, intelligent-eyed men, to whom the heart quickened a little as it only can after weeks spent in the society of the overwhelmingly ignorant. Stop, they were too intelligent; for the Kushok's first question, after the guests had been seated on mat-

tresses and the quaintly-wrought metal tea-cups filled from the glittering copper kettle, was, "Where is your passport?"

It was the perturbed Professor whom he addressed. But Ba'ron wriggled nimbly forward, with many prostrations of the body.

"The exalted Kushok must pardon. The holy man he addresses is under a vow. On the twenty-fifth day of the first month he does not speak, but is absorbed in meditation on sacred things."

"What the devil shall we do about the paper, though?" thought Traquair, who was not thus absorbed. But Ba'ron, with many graceful salaams, had drawn from his bosom a long yellow rustling paper, with seals and uncouth countersigns.

"Have no fear," he benevolently remarked in English, while the Kushok and the lama pored over the paper, the lama using a pair of Chinese spectacles. "It is passport. My Sahib who died could not take it with him. These men never read any language but their own."

"Of what nationality are you?" asked the Kushok, briskly. "The Ladakhi merchant game is up," his expression added, very clearly.

"English," said Traquair, with a gulp.

"And why do you come to our country? Do you not know no stranger has visited L'hasa for years? Your caravan is large, and you have much ammunition with you." Well had the Kushok used his eyes—and his spies. "Are you come to fight us?"

"The Kushok, who knows everything by reason of his surpassing wisdom, and quickly finds out what he

does not know, must surely be aware that our course lies far north of L'hasa. We mean to pass in peace over the Chang into the Kham country, paying for all we receive, and firing no shot save to kill a grouse or wild ass for our larder."

"Your larder!" said the Kushok. "You have great store of food with you."

"The Kushok will pardon," again interrupted the agile Ba'ron. "We do not touch those supplies. They are reserved for a religious sacrifice. The large holy man would doubtless explain the matter to you, were it not the twenty-fifth day of the first month."

"But with what object do you travel so far?" persisted the Kushok, hospitably adding more butter and salt to the bitter churned tea which was poisoning their mouths.

"A woman," returned Traquair, briefly and quickly, before Ba'ron's Asian imagination could blossom out afresh. "I travel to claim a bride who is pledged to me, and I to her, and who awaits me to the east of the Kham country."

Here, he hoped, was the universal chord, to which even these rude alien hearts could respond.

"That seems to me very mad," observed the Kushok, turning to his lama for confirmation. That cleric said nothing, but reversed the Chinese spectacles, out of which he probably saw nothing, and scrutinized the foreigner. "Very, very mad," the Kushok repeated, with animation. "Women are all too few in the Bodh country, and we are obliged to give all too much for them, and they assume all too much authority as soon as they get a husband or two. But to go so far for one,

in the winter and through such perils! There is a woman in your camp already." (Just what they had been trying to keep him from finding out.) "Will not she do?"

"She is not the right one, Kushok," answered the Briton, strangling a smile with the chop-sticks which he was manipulating so awkwardly. He changed the subject to one nearer the Kushok's heart—that of rupees. For fresh transport could, with his connivance, be secretly sent on from the southern towns to replace their jaded and dying animals, when the two caravans had parted company.

That was not for some days, during which, to save their own stores, they bought flour, tsamba, tea, and fuel of the other caravan, thereby knitting the Kushok's heart to them in bonds of enthusiastic affection. If all foreigners were like this, he declared, Tibet would receive them into her bosom as sons.

Traquair believed him. Yet despite the overcharging which he more than suspected, he would have liked to see more of this man. Many a lonely night afterward, on the terrible depopulated Chang, crouching in their rocking tent, with their numbed fingers almost thrust into the sulking fire of half-wet argols, they talked of him—this big bustling inquisitive-nosed person, who most marvelously knew each minutest operation that went on in his own camp and the foreigner's; who cheated them most outrageously in horses, but under whose protection not a grain of their ammunition nor a crumb of their food supplies had been looted; who would undoubtedly have butchered the whole party rather than let one of them proceed to L'hasa,

but up to the last moment would have pressed a cup of tea on them, repeating his invariable question:

"But how is it you so strangely do not butter and salt it?"

For pure companionship's sake, they would have been glad to hear the rude music of his yak-bells, and see the queer friendly caravan again.

"'Beyond the mountains there are yet people,'" quoted the Professor, significantly. He himself had enjoyed much edifying converse with the sleek sluggish lama, whose very silence and ignorance in matters of his own faith had taught the interviewer much that he wanted to know. Around the Professor's neck now hung a little metal shrine and a carved rosary, the parting gifts of the priest. "But you will die," he continued, "rather than discover it—any and all of you, Briton and Eskimo. You will not face facts in a simple spirit of receptivity, and without heat. You will buy and sell with one another, eat one another's bread,—"

"And salt," interpolated Traquair, whose palate had a long memory.

—"Travel together for days, with your eyes turned rigidly away from one another's humanity, that you may be able to join as of old in the comforting chant that 'East is East and West is West, and never the two may meet.'"

Traquair winced. Against Winifred's rallying laughter he had stoutly advanced that very argument many a time—for to a stubborn man a quotation is an argument. But the statement seemed suddenly open to proof, the utterance of an arrogant Jingoism, drunk with the pride of the "peculiar people" which has ever had

its humbling at the hands of the same God who, it dreamed, could not exist without some such sleek pet to stroke.

"I'll grant you," he returned, affably, "that East and West—Tatar and Slav—have already met, and produced a race which may yet sweep down and conquer us all. If we weren't Jingoes, Professor, we would have to be Russians."

"And his book on 'The Supreme Myth' would be squashed in the mails!" exclaimed Lambert, clapping his hands boyishly.

The Kushok had known only the beaten track to L'hasa. Concerning the Chang and the far Northeast, he could only give them data of a vague character, chiefly anthropological, not to say legendary. So they pushed on through the slow winter months, their fate in the hands of Ba'ron. The journey's details need not be given. The records of Huc, of Rockhill, of Bower, of Wellby, and the horror-distilling pages of Landor, can be read, to show what the traveler across Tibet must be, do, suffer, and encounter; and few of these experiences were spared the Traquair caravan. The bones of their transport animals grimly marked their path, to make the Gya Lam plain to the next wayfarer. The men grumbled and threatened desertion, until Michael Traquair felt like Columbus. Again and again the impudent celerity of the kiang (wild ass), or grouse, or black bear, whom their rifles invited to remain to a meal, forced them to draw on their dwindling reserve store of food. The mountain passes yawned with death in every form—from avalanches, from precipices, from the storms of sleet and rain which loved to

catch them on the unprotected slopes. The cold was indescribable;

> "Earth stood hard as iron,
> Water like a stone."

The graphic tale of the sober Huc of the lump of tsamba freezing on one's breast no longer seemed impossible. The thousand tangling rivers were frozen, either so solid that a great cube of ice must be broken for the half frenzied animals to slake their thirst, or else so thin that no foot could cross in safety, and a long and heart-wearying detour must be taken.

Men grow to love or hate passionately those with whom they are shut up in these solitudes. They sat close in spirit as well as body at nights over the warm embers in the tents, talking softly of Winifred Blaize. Even the Professor was less dispassionate than usual in mentioning her, especially when he remembered that in case of her rescue she would have priceless information to give him of the lamaistic forms of which she had had a year's study.

"A wonderful system, Buddhism," he said, musingly. "It recognizes the power, but not the blindness of Law. I would differentiate it from the Christian superstition, which Arnold so justly terms 'morality touched by emotion,' by designating it as ethics garnished with atheism."

"Mikey," interrupted Lambert, abruptly, "what *are* you going to do? Supposing we get to Somo alive; how shall we manage that rather tough-sounding customer of a Tu-tze, who according to Candace's account seems rather in love with Win—her?"

Traquair's lips curled. "In love!" he repeated. "A soapless savage!" Then, to the question: "Ask the nearest Chinese authorities to help me," he said. "If they fail me, offer food and money in ransom for her." His inner thought was that if anything were found so extraordinary as an Asiatic deaf to the clink of silver, there was left the ring of steel, the whiz of bullets, to render him deaf to all world-noises.

There was one feature of the situation never alluded to by any of the three men of the party, yet never absent from their minds. Each, even to the boy Lambert, knew that, after so long a delay, all they could hope to do was to take the Tu-tze's wife from him.

And then she would be Traquair's wife. After all these years, after the broken circuit, of which Lambert spoke with such strange positiveness, and in which he himself had almost come to believe, he would possess her at last. She would wear his name, his ring—his yoke. Curious that that last thought should occur; that he should think of her with an odd sense of compassion, of guilt, of well-nigh reluctance, as one who contemplates saving a bird from some woodland foe only to confine it in a cage. He tried to imagine her penned down in the "common round, the daily task," his wife must inevitably share—his bright freedom-loving falcon! The imagination slipped away from it like a foot from an icy slope. He wondered wistfully whether his love could compensate for his yoke. He went to sleep with such thoughts, and dreamed with surprise that her lips touched his face.

It was not lips, it was finger-tips; and it was not a dream, they were real.

"Are you awake?" whispered Candace. "Because there is some one outside the tent, moving and making noises."

"A perishing pony stumbling among the guy-ropes," whispered Traquair, reassuringly.

But he had become a Tibetan to the extent of having "chukpa on the brain," as he himself diagnosed it. He rose and went to the door of the tent. A figure, not to be mistaken for a pony's, indeed writhed on the ground in the uncertain light of the clouded moon, uttering smothered sounds of pain.

"Go back," whispered the man to the girl. "There may be danger."

"Then let me go," breathed Candace. Her thought lay in her eyes, as unconsciously as a dew-drop in the heart of a rose.

The man's blood stood still at the suddenness of it—then reeled violently against his heart in the onslaught of the cruel instinct of sex subjugation, so strangely implanted in both man and woman: "Behold, this is a man," it says cynically to the woman; and to him, "See, now, this is a woman; let us vanquish"—him or her, as the case may be. Its full temptation terrifically shook Michael Traquair, the more so that it boldly plead the joy to Candace in one kiss, one moment's disloyalty to —everything. "Will not she do?" the Kushok's question came back.—He wondered if this could be himself; but it always is.

He pulled himself sharply together. The almost Arctic cold of the night struck his damp brow like a blow. Calling a Tibetan salutation, and receiving no answer, he went up to the man, who was

crouching with his head on his knees, and curtly demanded:

"Lambert, what is it? are you gone fey?"

"Not much more than usual," replied the boy, sullenly. He too pulled himself together, rose, and spoke in an ordinary tone again. "You needn't mind this. I have these spells, and when they come I want to be outside, where I can throw myself about."

"But what spells, my boy?"

"I guess you'd call 'em blues. Don't bother about it."

"What causes them?"

"My troubles," said Lambert.

Led back to the tent, gently as if he were an immense child, he began in a low bitter voice to talk, his chin sunk between his great tall knees. To Candace he addressed himself chiefly. He was a man in pain, and she a woman.

"I'm not like other people," he said, morosely. "Think I don't know it? An orphan. My only father lies there snoring while I talk," as he indeed did. "Nobody loves me. You?" as Traquair interrupted him. "Why, man, you haven't a scrap to spare from *her*." (Traquair involuntarily bent his head to the warning.) "I want to be loved that way. See?"

He sunk his chin broodingly and was silent; then began muttering again: "Never *will* be like other people. What's a fellow to do, when he gets sunstroke hunting for his father, and it addles what little brains he's got? Hangs over me always. Can't think, can't study, can't grow up, can't graduate. Have to sing all the time to keep my courage up. I'm so lonely!"

Candace's face was in her hands. Traquair felt a yearning to take the two of them, faint with life's first thrusts, to his breast — and reddened for one-half the thought. "Is that all, Lambert?" he asked, gently, feeling somehow that it was not.

"All I'll tell," shortly. He wrapped his shivering body in a sheepskin, in a moment apparently asleep, and at all events refusing to speak more. Next day he was tying Lin's queue to the stub tail of his mule, and singing as they struggled along the dizzy mountain roads till Ba'ron begged him to desist, declaring that the reverberations would start an avalanche of snow down on their heads.

The winter weather was becoming daily more severe. By a merciful compensation they were at last beginning to descend from the Chang. They crossed the frozen river of the Chiamdo into what the discontented muleteers called, with some reason, "the wolf country," in the face of a fierce and exhausting snow-storm. Twice in the night the three white men rose and shoveled the snow from the roof of the tent, to prevent its sagging with the weight and burying them. One sleeps well after such exercise. Traquair felt that he was wakened, when he did waken, by the unnatural stillness of the world. No bells tinkling on the animals, no squalling muleteers, and yet the sun struggling in through the cracks of the skin-lined tent. Then he remembered the deep snow, and slept again.

"Say, Traquair! they're all gone!"

Lambert was shaking him frantically. "Ba'ron, Lin, every man and mule of 'em! Come out and see!"

They dashed together into the blinding outside world.

The tents, a stone's throw away, where the servants had camped, were gone. In their stead was a long trail of footsteps leading westward, showing which way the deserters had fled, unheard on the muffling snow.

"My God!" breathed Traquair. "They've left us here to starve, freeze, lose our way." It was the only time Lambert ever saw him lose courage. "Candace—Winifred!" he murmured, nervelessly. Both must die now, or live as hostages of savages.

"There's only one thing to do," he said. "Lambert, you stay in the tent with Candace. No," changing his mind from some indefinable impulse, "the Professor shall stay, and you come with me. We will follow the scoundrels."—"East *is* East," he stopped to dryly whisper in the ear of the Professor.

About two miles' chase brought them within sight of a speck coming toward them—two specks—and a short line, distinct on the glittering snow-crust. The first was Ba'ron, who recognized them before they him, and came up, despairingly plucking at his sheepskin.

"No use, Sar," he gasped. "They got long start. Ba'ron sleep like marmot, so weary. Never see till half out of sight, afraid to stop call master. All gone, wretched children of Eblis!" Though in religion professedly a Buddhist, the Argoon was in imprecation a Mohammedan, as befitted his mixed parentage.

"But what is that coming along behind Lin?" whom they recognized as the second speck.

"Some of the animals and their loads, whom we found abandoned on the trail. Suppose found too many to move quickly—inheritors of everlasting torment that they are! Do not weep, Sar," which Traquair had no

intention of doing. "It is something recovered," and, modestly, "you still have me."

But despite Ba'ron, and despite his consoling suggestions of the probable fate of the perfidious muleteers, self-separated in a hostile country from the sources of all rupees, guns, and authority, their defection made a tremendous difference to the party. The Europeans had to turn mule-tenders, and Ba'ron the same. Lin doggedly refused to let go the bridle of Candace Roberts' mount for all the other mules in creation, and Traquair, in no position now to quarrel with his followers, yielded. He himself, scarcely anxious, yet uneasy, rode closer to her side for the Chinaman's closeness, so that she was as well guarded as any young woman in Tibet.

They were, however, nearing the end of the pilgrimage. They were getting into the Kham country, whose eastern confines are the western confines of China. They were getting out of the lonely lifeless plateaux, whose desolate stretches seemed the supreme expression of the cynicism of Nature. Traquair never forgot the feeling of wild throbbing human joy with which he saw the first black tents of nomads, with the homely smoke-wreaths rising beneficently from their conical tops. He spurred his mule forward from the rear of the caravan, where with Candace and the appended Lin he had been riding. This was their usual division of guard from attacks—he and the two young people at the end of the shrunken procession, the Professor and Ba'ron at the head.

He was somewhat startled to find the line headless. It had stopped in front of the habitation of some Mongol grandee or statesman, whose tent was white, inscribed

with curious picture-writing, instead of woven black hair of yaks and goats, like those scattered round.

Sounds of feasting came from within, and the smell of boiling mutton, and — the head of Ba'ron himself, thrust through the door-slit, and the voice of Ba'ron, rendered thick by huge undertakings in the masticatory line.

"Enter, Sar!" he cried, dramatically, widening the doorway. "The khata," (scarf of salutation,) "quick!" taking it in his greasy fingers when Traquair produced it from the floppy sheepskin blouse which is the Tibetan's traveling-bag. "Another of my masters," he explained to the Mongol headman who came forward.

The fire in the hole in the ground burned merrily in the tent, its smoke, which escaped through a slit in the roof, turning a prayer-mill, an automatic means of grace before meat. A copper kettle of mutton boiling with rice, and another with tea, black as ink and bitter as pity, hung over it. An ancient crone, with strong flat features stretched in a smile of hospitality, was filling from these a number of little wooden bowls, stopping every minute or two to deftly snatch from the ashes a chupattie, or cake of unleavened bread. But before she served the motley family crouching about the fire in a circle, she placed a portion, with deepest obeisance, before a scarlet-clad figure on a raised seat, whose huge serene face glowed with satisfaction. The shrine about his neck showed off well against the scarlet blanket he had laid over his sheepskin, to keep out the cold one begins to hate at fifty.

The reverence they all paid him was afterward explained by Ba'ron: "'But who is this?' they all asked—

'a priest?'—I said yes, and with many obeisances they asked his prayers. I was forced to tell them he was a holy Chaberon (a living Buddha, Sar), under a vow not to speak till his pilgrimage to Ta-chien-lu was accomplished. 'But his head is not shaven like a priest's!' cried some pert Mongol brat. 'That,' said your swift-thoughted caravanbashi,* 'is because he would never answer when they asked him on which side they should begin shaving.'"

They had reached a chain of Mongol settlements, and the marches of the next half-dozen days were spent among this timid, almond-eyed, pastoral people, without ambition, without sorrow, save a perennial fear of the robber Bana tribes of the Golok. Strange fate of the children of conquering races! the blood of Kublai Khan lives mocked in these meek nomads, as that of the Viking in to-day's stolid Swede, and that of the fierce Kùsack in the cringing Russian peasant.

"I wish Win—I mean *she*—could see you now," would say Lambert, as Traquair dipped, without the formality of the Kushok's chop-sticks, into the soup-cauldron of whatever friendly Mongol invited them in at meal-time; or soused his lump of tsamba in the common vessel of tea. "East is West and West's East when one's hungry, eh, Mikey? One can even swallow man in the raw."

The Mongols sold them food—"organic and inorganic," said Lambert; in other words, sheep trotting along, bearing sacks of tsamba and skins of well-matured butter. The summer's drought had made grazing poor in that part of the country, so the sheep were fewer and leaner than would otherwise have been.

The nomads described the route to Ta-chien-lu—a roundabout way of reaching Somo, but who wanted to pass through the more northerly district, where the Bana tribes, the very princes of the chukpas, are apt to swoop down from the Koko-nor in search of grass for their immense herds of live-stock, and of travelers to harry? On account of those same Bana men—the same who were called, across the border, Si-fan and Golok—it was impossible to obtain either guide or escort. On this point these mild smiling flat-faced shepherds became suddenly inflexible.

Ba'ron knew nothing of his bearings now. His first Sahib had died, and he turned back, long before this distant point. But he stuck valiantly to his second one, and took glory to himself for all lucky hits. When, by an unlucky one, they went floundering for two days along a false trail in the Snowies, that led plump up against a great sheer precipice with no "Open Sesame" to it, he blamed it in the most positive manner on the Professor's boiling his thermometer. The dead Sahib, he said, bitterly, had persisted in all these outlandish and Providence-provoking performances—boiling a strange instrument in water and never eating it afterward, nor even drinking or besprinkling himself with the water—and *he* came to grief.

"Well, it's a case of finding our way back," said Traquair, gnawing his under lip Othello-like. The poor exhausted sheep, two of them plainly dying from exposure, stood huddling together for warmth, and there was a tenacious look about the eyes and ears of the mules, which said, "Don't *talk* of going further!" Yet

they did not want to stay in this cul-de-sac, an easy prey to robbers.

"Lambert, you mount and come with me," said the Scotchman. "We'll take a tent for an all-night stay, and either discover a road, or—"

"Swear," said the boy.

"You, Ba'ron, with the Professor" (of whom they always spoke as if he were a large wax doll) "and Miss Roberts" (whom it worried him to leave) "and Lin and the animals, can go back as slowly as you wish to our last camping-place, and wait our return."

It was well that they took the tent. Night came on long before any satisfactory path, or sign of human life and habitation, had been found. They huddled, lightless and foodless, in the tight little tent they had bought from the Mongols, and—swore. All the afternoon, nearly perished with cold, they had alternately ridden and led their beasts up and down wavering tracks that led back into themselves, touching nowhere the well-traveled caravan road whose terminus was Ta-chien-lu.

"I doubt if we shall even find the others again," said Traquair, waking in the night to this disagreeable thought.

Lambert did not answer.

Traquair put out his hand. The boy was not there.

"Well, what—" he began; and, springing up, put his face out of the tent into the darkness.

The wind spat into it a great vicious mouthful of snow-flakes. Not the Wild Huntsman of Celtic legend, with his demon train, could have swept by with a noise more elfin or more evil than this gale, whirling up from the open gorges below the mountain-side to meet the

white death that fell from the skies. These sudden furious snow-storms in the mountains were what killed travelers. *Where was Lambert?*

The dark was invincible. He had only matches with him. He had to wait, hearing the boy's piteous voice every moment in the yelling wind, until the dawn, which, after all, was but an hour in coming. By then the snow had stopped, but it was murderously cold.

"Lambert!" he called, despairingly, climbing and descending the slippery slope by turns. "Lambert! oh, my boy," almost with a sob, "*be* somewhere!"

"Here," said a tired voice, unemotionally, under his very ears.

He started. In a sort of triangular retreat formed by two leaning boulders lay the boy, wrapped in sheepskin and blanket.

The wrath of the lost child's mother beat in the breast of the Scot, robbing its first throb of thankfulness. "You—you little fool!" he cried, kneeling down and chafing the boy's stiff hands. "What brought you out of the tent? One of those absurd morbid spells of yours?"

"Yes," said the little fool. "I didn't realize it was snowing until—it came with a rush, and then—I couldn't find my way back." He spoke with difficulty, and drowsily. His lips were purple. Traquair rubbed at him roughly, even pounded him, but Lambert did not seem to feel, and closed his eyes indifferently.

"Boy, wake up, or you'll freeze where you lie!" He pulled the other into a sitting posture, and forced down his throat the last thumb's depth of brandy in the flask he had with him.

"Let go," said Lambert, apathetically. "Better dead anyway. Not like other fellows."

He tried to lie down again, but Traquair seized him by the numb shoulders. "Talk!" he commanded. "Sing—anything, even your infernal irreverent hymns."

The boy's eyes did open. "Don't," he murmured. "That—means a lot to me. Never dared to tell father, you know. Poor sort of coward—better dead."

"What do you mean?" questioned Traquair, still sharply—speaking so with intention, though his heart had stopped still in surprise. Under his frantic rubbing and stimulating questions, as well as under the reviving effect of the brandy, Lambert began to open his eyes and talk naturally:

"Mean what I say. Traquair, ever hear a verse from the Bible something like this: '*As panteth the hart for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul for God?*' I suppose you've heard it from a child; but *I* wasn't brought up religiously. But it struck me so when I heard 'em read it that first Sunday in the place. It seemed to me that that was just what had always been the matter with me."

"What place?" catechetically.

"A little church, 'way down in a part of the city my aunts didn't know existed. I've sung in the choir there ever since I was old enough to sit still on a bench. That's where I got my voice trained. A boy I played with sang there, and—it had the charm of the forbidden, you know. It's a wonder people never hit on the plan of prohibiting church-going. My two old aunts would trot off to their own church on Sunday, with tears in their poor eyes because father had forbidden 'em ever to

"A stumbling girl, who cried, with piercing joy, 'Here,—he is here!'"

take me, and—off I'd scamper to mine, with nobody knowing anything about it. And — well, the sort of thing you hear there soaks in, when you're young. That's what it's for, I suppose. The choir-master was a splendid young fellow, something like *you*, Mikey, and had a great influence over us boys, and he used to talk to me about things which it seemed to me filled up the hollow place in me. There's a hollow in everybody's heart, Mikey, isn't there?"

"Everybody's, my boy!"

"I used to sit on the bench, and think over those words, over and over, '*Like as the hart panteth for the water-springs*,' until it seemed to sort of become a part of me—that and the hymn they sang that first Sunday. You see it was all so novel and beautiful and appealing —like finding out you'd a mother hidden away somewhere, and nobody had ever told you of her. They sang that same hymn when I was confirmed—'Love of Jesus, all divine, Fill this longing heart of mine.'" He tried huskily to hum it. "I never dared tell my father, because I never lost hope that some day, if I didn't exasperate him, he'd get a little bit fond of me. Then when I thought what a miserable unworthy coward I was, I had to—go out-doors and writhe. If I die, you'll explain to him, Traquair?"

"You won't die," said Traquair, a hot thing on his cheek turning to brittle ice in the wind. "Halloo, I see people coming—the Bana rascals, I'll be bound."

But they were only two, and came on foot—a stumbling man holding up a stumbling girl, who held out her hands and cried, with piercing joy, "Here, he is here!" then collapsed into the arms of Lin, who

had commenced to rub her before Traquair could reach her.

"In God's name," said the white man, faintly. "Candace, what could have possessed you?"

She did not answer, but closed her eyes like Lambert. Traquair could not bear that the yellow man should touch her.

"Your hands are too cold, Lin," he said. He knelt in the snow and rubbed her—alas, with the less strength for having so vigorously pummeled Lambert. The fierce ache of the cold, which makes men want to whimper and cry, had found out his every bone, every fibre of his flesh.

"She *would* seek you," said Lin. "All night through the storm she waked and fretted, and the large priest could not console her. She left the caravan secretly, but I of course followed."

"Candace, open your eyes," besought the Scotsman. "My God! you will die through my fault in bringing you here, and your blood—your pure pitiful innocent young blood—will be on my head. Talk, Candace, if you care for any of us, and if you do not wish to die."

"To die!" said Candace, startled. She opened her great eyes, in which Traquair had once told himself "a spirit lamp burned." "Oh, I must not; I am not fit."

"Who, if not you, Candace?" groaned the man. It seemed as though he could not bear it. He pulled off his sheepskin blouse, leaving only the woolen undergarment, and wrapped it about her body.

"Oh, but I am so bad! Prepare me to die, Mr. Traquair!"

"What have you done, you little white soul?" It

was good for her too to talk. He himself was growing numb. He felt it, helplessly.

"Dreadful things! I—deserted Mrs. Guthrie at Shanghai; but you know about that. I have thought hard things of my own parents; but I cannot speak of that. And once I—tried the Smoke." Her voice sank inaudibly, and, between shame and drowsiness, her head hung heavily forward.

"I was so miserable," she whispered. "I thought it would help me to forget, as my parents said it helped them. I stole the drug from my mother—that itself was a sin. I lighted the lamp, but with the first smell of the Smoke I grew sick and ashamed and terribly frightened, and I ran from the room and wept. Do you think that will be forgiven?"

"Yes," said Traquair, dully. "Talk more." He drew her sheepskin-shrouded form closer to his own. The thought of the spirit was that he might warm her; that of the body, that she might warm him. In a moment she seemed to sleep on his arm, and he had not left the strength, or even the sense, to rouse her. Lambert rolled a little closer to Lin; Lin nestled to him, East and West touching, in that common defence against the common enemy of man. A poison more potent even than the Smoke was creeping over them all. Oh, how soft the snow—and even warm—how heavy the eyelids,—each knew, with death, and was too stupefied to care.

Hoofs on the crunching snow were heard, indistinctly, but no head turned. More hoofs galloped down the slope—it seemed strange, and not right—the newcomers bore the aspect of Bana brigands—but what could one do?

It was like a nightmare without the horror. Michael Traquair made a mental motion toward his rifle, lying within a foot of him on the snow, but his hand did not move. It was like the bewilderment of a heap of human beings in an accident, when a man tries to raise himself with his neighbor's hands on his neighbor's feet. Dark men, uttering savage cries, left their animals, and descended on them, binding them with thongs—surely the strangest, tamest capture that ever was! Traquair saw the swarthy face bend over him, and actually closed his eyes, as did Lambert in the midst of a torpid wonder as to what his father would do now.

As another Bana man laid hold on Candace, however, Traquair's consciousness stirred to a dim sense of this tragic ending to a strife against the gods.

"Candace—Winifred!" he murmured in his mind, as they bound him to a pony. And once—"Candace!" again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RETOURNONS À NOTRE TU-TZE.

"Thou drawest me, thou drawest me,
Across the glimmering wildernesses,
And drawest me, my love, to thee,
With dove's eyes hidden in thy tresses.
The world is many: my love is one.
I find no likeness for my love.
The cinnamons grow in the grove:
The Golden Tree grows all alone."

UNDOUBTEDLY the Tu-tze of Somo was in love.

It was telling on him. His face could not lose its ruddiness, which was in the pigment of his skin. But careworn creases arched eyes and lips. The splendid packing of brawn hung more loosely on his great sinewy frame, and there was less of it to hang. Blood-guiltiness weighed on Winifred. In his presence she lowered the yellow eyes which were sending from his gray ones the light—the roguish confidential twinkle which proclaimed the unconquerable boy beneath the stalwart chieftain, the benign *pater patriæ*.

She never knew at what moment she would hear his heavy hasting steps, accompanied often by Daisy's little scurrying ones, and he would plunge into her apartment and into conversation as though he had only left the one and dropped the other an instant before—which was indeed sometimes the case. He poured out

all his administrative troubles, like a Grande Monarque to his Maintenon, and she poured out advice. When he did not take it she told him what she thought of him, their relation of jailer and prisoner being momentarily obscured, as social differences might be between two children absorbed in building a playhouse together. In the mirror of his graphic talk she saw from her dungeon, like the Lady of Shalott, the whole great little interesting world of Somo, its cares and joys, its intrigues and governmental problems, and, being of less introspective nature than the pale spinner of the magic web, they were not shadows to her, nor did she sicken of them.

The lamas plotted and the people complained, he confided to her. A spear had been thrown at him from behind a clump of withering laurels, the last time he rode down the southern mountains. Should he search out the rebel, he asked Winifred, or ignore the attack?

"I would have to have him killed," he said musingly, "and then it is one less of the Shang-Shang-ren to keep out Chinese and Golok. And the rascal throws a spear well. Only Kwoh knows it struck me, for I pulled it out so quickly it seemed like balancing it in my hands, while Kwoh cried out: 'See now! our ruler is impervious to weapons!' One has to practice these little tricks," with a faint revival of the twinkle. "It was well it was not a Golok spear, for they are sometimes poisoned."

He told her too that the Golok were leaving the Koko-nor district and ranging farther and farther south, rendered desperate by the privation which an extended drought brings to a pastoral people. "Never have we

had so long a drought before. The lamas suggest a religious dance to invoke rain. I would not show so little piety as to say it would be without effect, but I *will* say that no rain could save the harvest now."

One night a terrific uproar in the courtyard penetrated even her far window-hole, and she thought that the Tu-tze's foes had at last descended. But he came in to see her the next day, smiling genially as ever, explaining that he had cut the throats of all his Tibetan gate-dogs with his own hand.

Winifred exclaimed. He had loved those huge hairy beasts, roughly fondling them while they leapt up on him when he walked with her on the wall. But the people had murmured, saying too many were fed at the castle. Each dog ate as much as two men, while its carcass would feed many. Their sacrifice left only corruptible humans to guard the gates—"But one's people come first. I have ordered that my cooks serve me no more dainties or large portions. Perhaps I thus defer the day of my poisoning," showing his white teeth.

"These people of mine do not understand me," he continued, frowning. "Were they not my brave Shang-Shang-ren, I would say they were silly sheep. They think I want them to starve to-day because I bid them prepare against starvation to-morrow, so—led on by those rascally lamas, I believe—they secretly pilfer from the reserves of grain and butter in my towers, thinking the Tu-tze does not notice, and gather on their housetops to feast and make merry with their wives and children, while their ruler walks the ramparts and plans for their safety. He is all alone. That part shall not last long," with a sudden flash of the eyes which frightened

Winifred's own to the ground. For she never knew, either, when to look for one of those sudden rages of love, breaking up his stern concentrated expression into the wistful imploring expression of Budsy, which characterized—whisper, Winifred, did it never enhance?—these curious councils.

"I tell you all!" he once burst out. "I, who never took an adviser, thereby mortally offending the red caps! And you—you come from a strange country, where I very well see that more is known, and you tell me nothing, save that you cannot love me!"

True. The veil of mystery is woman's safest protection. It is not the woman's fault if it is also her subtlest attraction. But she must not wrap it too close, when she is in a man's power. Hurriedly reviewing the daily life and thought of the world she had left, for something which might interest the Tu-tze, and turning from its social and political systems, its rich history, its railroads and telegraphs, which did not interest her—quickly she asked, "Shall I tell you a story—" "Budsy?" she had almost added.

"Yes," said the Tu-tze, eagerly. "We hear few stories here, save from some pilgrim. Will your tale, like his, be all of gods and demons?"

"Not all," said Winifred, and commenced her narrative.

It was by no mere accident that she selected a romantic tale of the old chivalric days of song and story which possibly never were save in song and story. Never mind: upon their exaggerated tradition has grown up such chivalry as is. Once, she well knew, all these conceptions of knightly nobleness, of high esteem for

women and of the sacredness of helplessness, came as a new, perhaps grotesque, gospel to intellects not far from the Tu-tze's stage of development. Chivalry was not a matter of race or religion. Only on a foundation already existent in human nature could it have been built. Any impression she could make by parables on this acute yet unsophisticated mind was one more stroke for her safety, until her true deliverer should come.

And besides, these stories had always fascinated her—this tropic jungle of the imagination, whose brilliant bizarre blossoms she yet knew hid many a black root of evil passion, many a secret serpent of injustice, and grew all out of the dark mold of a dying social system. Swaying her tall body like a Delphic prophetess, her eyes kindling as when in the moonlight she abandoned herself to the melody of "Kubla Khan" before the staring Emma and Candace, she half recited, half chanted, tale after tale, day after day, as day after day the Tu-tze earnestly asked for more: tales of Prester John, of Morgan le Fay, of Una and the Red Cross Knight, of Ser Federigo and the falcon, of the Lily Maid of Astolat, of Roland and his horn. Scheherazade struggling for her life, Penelope for her liberty, could have thrown herself no more desperately into her task.

Yet—simile most singularly incomplete! how content was each of these with a barbarian! Ulysses does not repel the feminine fancy, nor Jacob the rude herdsman, in servitude for Rachel, nor David the sinner-saint, nor even Solomon in all his polygamous glory. Nay, King Arthur himself, and the rough and rapacious barons whom she celebrated, were not far different from

the Tu-tze, perhaps, if all were known. She recognized with great frankness that the recoil from the idea of becoming his wife was not so great as when it came to her fresh. The ice is always broken for a deed when once we have squarely contemplated it. . . . Yet there are tears on your cheek, Winifred. Oh, come quickly, Lord Michael, ere the Tu-tze's rough hand dries them!

"What do my stories make you think of?" she asked one day, abruptly and curiously.

"I think the men of your country must be very weak," he answered.

"The men of all countries are weak," said Winifred, audaciously. "It is only women who are strong."

"I have not found them so," said the Tu-tze, opening his eyes.

"Have you not?" asked Winifred, quietly.

The eyes drooped.

"I have asked you for nothing, have I?" she continued, meditatively. "Save for my dagger, and my freedom, and news of my faithful servant Lot—all of which you denied me. So I asked no more, but gave. I have given you much excellent advice."

"You have," agreed the Tu-tze. "I shall be quite content to have you as my only wife. The Man-tze girls are pleasant, but they know nothing."

"Through me," went on his benefactress, slightly confused, "you have become enabled to talk to your son, because I taught him the finger-language."

"That other language you know," interrupted the Tu-tze, eagerly, "the speech of your country—could I not learn it? Would not that make a difference?"

Winifred looked at him. The big, palpitating, strong,

dependent creature—could he not realize things? "No," she said, gently. "No difference—Budsy." She really said it, this time. "Many men speak that language whom I do not love."

"That is good," he said, heartily. "I feared you loved them all, you seemed so anxious to get away to them." Her lip trembled. "Ah!" he cried, in a transport, "you smile on me! Are there any of those men more hateful to you than I?"

Her answer was not negative. In after years, when reviewing this eventful month of her life, she hung her head under the consciousness that she had, in civilized parlance, "encouraged" the Tu-tze. Self-preservation compelled it. Most unattached women after thirty overrate the potency of the feminine charm as much as they underrated it before. She was not like them. It had remained for the Tu-tze to teach her, who came from a country where more was known, her strength. What could she do but use it—half shamefacedly, half scorning it as an art of the harem—to lull him, to keep him charmed neither too much nor too little? erring, when it was necessary to err, on the side of charming him too much?

She had never sat out on the stairs of a Washington ballroom with a beardless youth; but she walked the battlements of this lone castle in the heart of Asia with a barbarian, and found in it the undeniable fascination of skimming over thin ice arm in arm with a strong reckless skater. Flirting with a Tu-tze! why, it was like tickling a howitzer.

"But this cannot go on," said the Tu-tze, abruptly, one day, startling her. In her yawning ignorance of

life she had actually thought it could—that she could keep this man in love and yet at bay during a whole winter, while Michael Traquair was making toilsome way to her. "Either you must become my wife," he continued, "or you must kill me, or I send you back to your own country. I will never do that," firmly setting his white teeth. "Sometimes I feel it would not so much matter if you killed me, for there is not much joy in life. It is to fight spears and plots, and eat and drink—or hunger and thirst—and sleep, and be scorned by a woman with yellow eyes. I am a man, not a child or a fool, though you treat me as such, and although I see you come from a country where more is known, even by the women. And I see that this cannot go on."

She did not answer. The suddenness and truth of his speech had numbed her. The Tu-tze sighed.

"Perhaps," he said, uncertainly, "I have not made myself pleasant to look at. I have repaired that error to-day, but you have not seemed to notice."

She *had* noticed, however. A rudely-clad clansman, arrayed to ride up and down a rough and rocky territory on a muddy-kneed mule, superintending agricultural operations *sans ceremonie*, does not suddenly change to the silken splendor and gold-embroidered magnificence of an Eastern potentate in state robes, and a woman not notice it. He towered over her, consciously superb in handsomely wrought jacket upon jacket and scarf upon scarf, and a wonderfully rich and rusty scabbard to the straight Tibetan sword at his side,—and asked, in amazement, "Does it make no difference?"

"No difference," repeated Winifred. She could not call such a grand personage Budsy.

The Tu-tze wheeled without a word, and left her. Somewhere in the passage he stopped and called back to her. "Be ready when I want you," he said, brusquely.

* * * * * * *

All the lamas in the world seemed to be swarming over the castle, in preparation for the sacred dance which was to draw rain from the skies. The Tu-tze in his hasty egress from Winifred's apartment stumbled over one of them, who grasped his silken robe instantly.

"Tu-tze," he began, without preamble, "I am but a poor monk, yet I wish to see things done properly. A certain divination with a charred shoulder-bone, performed here within a twelvemonth—the Tu-tze will recollect it—was not valid before the Ineffable Ones. That is, one lama turned the prayer-wheel in the wrong direction, thus bringing confusion into the matter."

"Why do you tell this?" asked the other, abruptly.

"Because I love to see things done duly. There are matters in all lamaserais which would be reformed, were I a chief lama. It is not right, for instance, that wise and virtuous rulers should so often be defied." He paused, adding, gently: "I wish only to warn the Tu-tze that some results of to-day's ceremonies may have been decided on before the ceremonies were held. Were I a Khanbo-lama, I would be honest with gods and men."

The Tu-tze tilted back his head and wrinkled the corners of the gray eyes in a laugh. "Son," he said, by way of reply, "I too began to study for the priest-

hood, in the third order. One learns much guile, does one not?"

He strode on through the spacious hall, and into the chief entrance-way, where the rough wooden erection on which he usually sat to give judgment had been covered with leopard skins and fine pulo cloth from Tibet.

On this he took his seat, his smile already lost in the facial rigidity required of an Oriental in public ceremonies. He stared coldly about him into the immense courtyard, which was already filled with curious villagers, as was the uppermost ledge of the wall where he walked at nights with the fair woman who laughed at him. In the cleared space in the centre an altar had been set up, for—an unusual feature of a Man-tze province—the monastery and attached temple were a good two-days' march away.

Capped heads of lamas, like red and yellow beads, flanked the altar in orderly groups. Among them the Tu-tze recognized the pallid clever face of his disinterested friend of the passageway, now devoutly clicking his rosary with the rest. Horns, gongs and cymbals were in the hands of some. At the appearance of their chief they had burst out in a perfunctory crash and bang and bellow which to Man-tze ears was music, and then subsided, to recommence their din with fresh enthusiasm as the head lama showed himself through a side door of the castle, and behind him a procession of the most frightful beings the fervid Eastern fancy, rich in imagination of terrors, could create.

What is equal to the horror of a face? What so pursues the madman in his delirium, or haunts the timid child in the dark? And here, in the wild and

writhing dance into which the mask-wearers threw themselves at a signal crash of the conchs and cymbals, was a Hell of faces. They grinned grisly at the awestruck spectators from between shoulder-blades on painted capes, from between knees on painted aprons, from tridents and crowns on little knobs surmounted with miniature masks like dreadful little dolls, from weird antlers nodding over countenances more bestial than the beasts, hideous inspirations of tongues lolling from foreheads, ears growing from chins, ferocious eyes and tusks besprinkled all over distorted visages with only enough of the human likeness to torment. Ape and demon, phantom and satyr, the whole world of nightmare, writhed in the fantastic figures of that reveling dance, whose savage plunge into the pure agony of the senses was joy to the participants, gone completely fey.

"I take refuge in Buddha!" they began to shout, deliriously. "Oh, the jewel in the lotus, oh!" as though it had just been discovered.

But the Tu-tze closed his eyes in weariness. The purpose of these devil-dances is to accustom the faithful during life to fearsome images, so that the spirit world can contain for them no horrors after death. The purpose of this particular ceremony was to invoke rain, and from the looks of the leaden cloud spreading over their heads, and the rising wind, it appeared as though it were to take instant effect. But what did the Tu-tze care for rain? He only knew and cared that there was room for another on the seat of judgment beside him. Every Man-tze youth watching the show had his arm around a soft girl's neck. It was intolerable.

He beckoned Kwoh.

"Tell her I bid her come," he said, firmly. "Tell her—tell her there is somewhat to see," showing that he was not without grasp on the essentials of her character.

Kwoh was long returning. The dancers kept it up, the priestly limbs having apparently no notion of the meaning of the word "tire." Finally the Tu-tze's emissary reappeared. "She will not come," he said, ruefully.

"But I want her," growled the Tu-tze, in his mastiff's voice.

"Shall I bring her with my hands?"

"Not yet," hesitating. "The Khanbo-lama has gone up to the altar."

The dance ceased with a final crash of the instruments, and the Horrors fell back motionless into place beside the other monks, as he advanced. He was a big, obese, slouching man, with a face whose deadness outmasked the most hideous countenance seen in the dance, and form robed in splendid red-and-yellow changeable silk, wrapped round with crimson scarves inscribed with Sanskrit prayers. Five times his prostrate brow beat the ground before the altar, with its five tiers of offerings—the seven lamps, the seven cups of water, the seven vases of flowers, the seven vessels of incense, and the seven strangely-shaped designs in butter and rice patisserie made by his own holy hands. Then, climbing into the throne-like chair placed before it, covered with magnificent Chinese embroidery, like one in a trance he commenced chanting, the priests after him, the people after the priests, mantra after mantra, striking the

sacred cymbals and bells laid beside him on a small table, with the lifeless precision of an automaton:

"*Namo Buddhaya, namo Dharmaya, namo Sanghaya!*"

The great murmur rose and fell with impressive monotony on the chilling evening air, accompanied by the still more universal click of the rosary and hum of the prayer-mill, while the half-hypnotized watchers drew their sheepskins more warmly about them, and half forgot what they were praying for in the intoxication of the prayer. Dusk was falling, and pine torches had been brought, to go out every moment in the rising wind, which whipped the Khanbo-lama's red scarves about his rigid shaven head, before he put up his hand as a signal that he would say something. He did not rise.

"In the vision of all worlds where my soul has been dwelling," he began, in a thin sing-song voice, "it was revealed to me that no rain will fall in Somo for months, maybe for years."

A dismal sound arose from the people, an exclamation from the Tu-tze. "Yet the wind is damp at this very moment," he murmured to the retainer nearest him. Kwoh he had sent on business elsewhere.

"Rain will not come," pursued the Khanbo-lama, in that same droning perfunctory tone, which intimated that he did not care greatly about the matter, "because a witch is among you, bringing drought and disaster. In the house of the Tu-tze, in the heart of the Tu-tze, already trying to take his kingdom from him, bewitching him with a false promise of sons."

The people groaned, rather stagily. It might have

been suspected that they had been industriously prepared for this revelation.

"The Tu-tze hears what his people say," said the Khanbo-lama, with melancholy indifference. "He has heard what the Hidden Wisdom says. Will the Tu-tze himself in his benignance have something to say?"

The challenge was in manner rather than in words. The people stopped groaning to listen. Instinctively they felt a crisis had come.

"Say?" flashed out the man in the silk wrappings and the leopard skins. "I say that I felt a drop of rain on my nose even now, and so must you have, while you groaned. No one respects religion more than I, but I know thunder when I hear it"—its low rumbling noise was sounding over their heads—"and I—am going to marry the foreign woman."

He suddenly stood up. "She has yellow eyes," he cried out, in a rapture. "She is more soft and pleasant than all women living, and has more understanding than all men. I love her, and will make her mistress of you all. I would do it though she brought ten thousand droughts, and frightened ten thousand thousand of priests."

He flung out his arms to her vision, and felt the wild wet wind on his face, his bosom, strange and exhilarating and filling some sobbing need in the human heart, like her. Big grudging drops were beginning to slowly splash down in every one's face—even the lama's, which he saw by the sputtering torches convulsed with intense chagrin—and he laughed, suddenly and joyously. "I have sent for her," he said.—"Where is she, Kwoh?" very sharply, as the henchman made his appearance alone in the doorway.

"She will not come," replied Kwoh, disgustedly. "She says she will not come, though you send seven times."

He saw no particular cause for whispering, and the remark was carried from mouth to ear through the crowd. The Khanbo-lama burst into defiant laughter, followed by all his satellites. A timid ripple was heard from the people.

"She will not come, though the Tu-tze loves her!" the chief priest shrilled. It was his to score now. "Ill is the day for the Shang-Shang-ren when their ruler's weakness is the mock of sorceresses! I translated the message from the spirits wrong; it was not drought that she would bring, but flood, storm, disaster — hear it rolling upon us now—Oh!" he shrieked, in genuine physical fear, partly of the maddened Tu-tze, who had made an impulsive gesture as though to sacrilegiously charge upon him, partly of the giant javelin of blue lightning hurled from the cracking skies almost in his face, while with one thunder-boom—no more—roofs and walls of water descended upon their heads as though the sluice-gates of a river had suddenly been opened. A more abrupt check to a quarrel could not come.

Even in her far-off cell Winifred heard the screams, the shouts, the stampede of panic-stricken people, drenched already to the skin, into the castle for shelter. She could even guess what caused it, for through her one high-set window came not only the sound of the beating torrent, but its spray in her face, soft and sweet to her as to the Tu-tze.

"How pleased the Tu-tze will be!" she murmured. She bore him no ill-will for his baffled attempt to bring his Vashti before the curious people. She held up her

face to the vivifying kiss of the rain, fragrant of the free world. Drawing breath after breath more deep and ecstatic, she threw back her head. It struck something softly moving behind her. Before she could cry out, two terrible arms gripped her tightly around the throat, and some great thick suffocating thing was thrown hastily over her head and wrapped about it; her hands and feet were tied with thongs that cut, and before that deep breath of joy had fairly been exhaled from her swaddled body, where it stopped, startled, near the heart, some one was running with her through the passageway. Some other feet followed, some other hands pushed open doors, and from her captor's step she could tell they were plunging down the rock stairway which led down the cliff from the castle.

Bound hand and foot and mouth—they stopped to pull her head-covering around, so that she could just manage to breathe through a thin, apparently ragged spot—she could not cry out. And to whom should she cry? The Tu-tze was lord of the castle, lord of whatever hidden Rosamond-bower where his emissaries might be taking her, unsuspected by priests and people. Struggle no more, Winifred. You escaped once, you fenced long and bravely, you trusted superbly—in a treacherous savage, like a romantic school-girl; but—

> "This is the hour that has whispered low
> When the pulse failed, in the nights we know!"

Yet, bound hand and foot and mouth, her body trembled less with fear than with an overwhelming disappointment, an overmastering indignation against the Tu-tze.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPTIVITY LED CAPTIVE.

"LET me die," spirit and body panted together, fiercely; "let me drown, suffocate, perish by the hands of these rough men, before he looks upon my face again!"

Rough they were, as they unceremoniously swung her swathed person up on the back of some animal—from its gait, a mule—but no rougher than the tempest against which they urged it forward in baffled haste. It would have been a wonderful storm to see, a terrible storm to fear, were one out free on the mountain-side. Booming torrents sounded on slopes where dried channels had wound serpentine. Trees moaned, bent, cracked, broke. There was no more thunder—the skies were too busy. Such villagers as had not been able to crowd inside the castle, or had left the sick or the young at home, frantically hurried past her and her captors in the dark, without a glance or question, their only object being to attain their high-perched homes before the whole hillside slid and melted down-valley into perdition.

Winifred felt the feet of the poor mule under her plashing in a hundred rivulets in his slow piteous progress, felt him trying to hasten under the lash and the husky execrations of the half-drowning men who

had seized her, then felt him pitch forward and sink in exhaustion—and the last thing she felt was a stone. Her head had struck it, and she felt nothing more for an unreckonable space of time.

She wakened up chill, wet, hungry, lying on what seemed and was a floor. The rain sounded less loudly to her muffled ears, which meant probably that she was in a house, most likely a deserted one, such as are too common in these settlements of a vanishing people. The stifling head-covering had been removed, and a system of rather clever bandages on mouth, eyes and ears substituted. Men moved about her; she could hear their steps, and smell their fire—and their food, which they did not offer her. She did not believe any one of them was the Tu-tze himself. Perfidious and disappointing, in the Occidental use of the adjectives, as he had proven himself, he would never have let her lie in her sodden garments on a damp floor, uncared for, and faint with hunger, while he ate, slept and warmed himself.

Of this Winifred felt positive. To tell what else she thought would be to tell very little. To think was to fear, and a mind weakened by hunger cannot concentrate itself. After a long while one of the men came and rudely tore the bandage away from her mouth, to hold there a bowl of rain-water, and cram in a piece of half-raw chupattie, giving her no time for questions. Four days—though she did not know it—passed in this fashion. Gradually she guessed that they were waiting for the rain to slacken. It was no brief shower, for when a long drought breaks, the hot earth seems fairly to lift her heaving bosom to the snow-drifts of the sky

and melt them all away in streams of healing, before she is slaked.

A fifth day would have finished Winifred. But on the night of the fourth the mighty beat of the rain on the house began to waver; it came in gusts and whimpers and tempers, instead of the relentless downpour; and when it was at its last gasp, Winifred's abductors took her outside, bound her again on the mule, which she had discovered by sundry stamping and other noises to have been informally quartered in the room with them, and swiftly, stealthily, with incredible knowledge of the difficult road, the procession went its way again.

It was a hilly way. At the summit of the steepest of all, and after what must have been a night's march, they halted in a place which rang under the mules' hoofs like a stone courtyard. There was only one other place in Somo where there were walls, and gates—she heard them closed after her—besides the Tu-tze's castle. And as the shrill sound of conchs, the sombre one of drums, faintly reached her ears in a familiar ululation, she opened her lips in a long wild startling cry of the last fear of all, greater even than that of the Tu-tze. She was in the hands of the lamas.

* * * * * * *

All she had ever heard or known of them—their cruelty, their bestiality, their sovereignty in their own stronghold—somehow held her as apprehensions had never held her before, in the white-walled cell where they thrust her, with unwashed hands stuffed fiercely into her mouth to prevent more outcry while they undid the bandages. From that, she surmised that the whole monastery was not aware of her presence. She might

have surmised that those who knew of it had forgotten it, for all the notice that was taken of her during the days that followed. The monks were not dead—faintly, like the sound of the sea in the shell, she heard their monotonous ejaculation on the jewel in the lotus, morn, noon and night. The curious part of it was that she herself was not dead; for from the instant she realized where she was, she realized why she was there.

As cells go, her new prison was a rather comfortable one; smaller than the Tu-tze's dungeon, but lighter, and immaculately clean, with whitewashed walls and a big barred window. Some Buddhist saint or sinner had probably here passed many years of devotion. In the stone wall, cut painstakingly with some instrument none too sharp, the uncouth letters of the magic formula, "*Om mani padme hum,*" appeared many times over. Up against the opposite wall was a small gilt Buddha of the Indo-Tibetan type of execution. With him Winifred softly talked, like a priestess to her teraph, to break the silence of her cell. Nothing else ever broke it, for the waddling ecclesiastic who brought her food and stirred up a fresh fire now and then in the bronze brazier which she was thankful to have, would not converse. He might as well have been deaf and dumb like little Daisy (poor Daisy! are you crying for your friend to-night?)

"Bid your head lama here," she had said to him, the first day. "I wish to question why he seizes and imprisons me."

Not a muscle of his face showed he heard her. And Winifred herself was well aware that when captors

wish to see prisoners they do not come, but send. All but the Tu-tze!

The food they gave was good—dried mutton, chang (the dreadful barley beer, which she could drink, as she could eat and drink everything), cakes of ground maize, and queer sugary dried dates. These last she prudently let alone, for fear they might be cousins-Tibetan to the sinister sweetmeats by whose agency the sinless soul of the Talè Lama is wafted from the corporeal to the ethereal, whenever his Gyalpos (regents) deem advisable. But it was plain that the monastery was not, like the rest of Somo, on half-rations—"The rascals!" the Tu-tze would have added.

Poor Tu-tze! are you too crying? The vision of his distress hurt her acutely. Robbed and wronged—ah, poor Budsy! The yellow-eyed woman has run away from you again—what else can you think? She wished vehemently that he could know the truth—and instantly, guiltily, saw his eyes blazing reproach for the evil thing she had thought of him. She pictured his expression when he first missed her. His gray eyes would dart fury, his breath come hot and hard, the strong fingers clutch the soft of his palm in a convulsion of despair—why, she had seen him do that simply for her scorn! What *would* the Tu-tze do when he found her gone?

Anything, save think of the lamas! And Michael Traquair—oh, Heaven send that Michael Traquair had turned from her frantic cry for help, and embarked on no forlorn hope of rescue which must now be a certain despair. Yes: let us hope that Michael has long since married some round-faced girl with the heart and the ambitions of a dove, and could not come. For

who, even the Tu-tze, could wrest her from these priests?

One day a new man brought her meal. He was lean, with deep eyes and a clever mouth—a Dantesque face just spoiled by a hint of the politician. And he spoke without solicitation, even eagerly.

"Are you a witch?" he asked.

"That I will not say," answered Winifred, coolly. The person asking a question is at a disadvantage, as her other jailor very well knew.

"You will have to say," he replied, quickly, "for I am to take you to the Khanbo-lama, and if you declare yourself a witch he will very likely be afraid of you, and hesitate a little longer about killing you. Were I a head lama"—a little scorn in his voice—"I would know my own mind. I would either kill a witch or I would set her free, as I would either make friends with a Tu-tze or I would destroy him and take the rulership on me. But nothing is done right in this monastery."

The Khanbo-lama sat judicially before a small table. Only a little gilding was necessary to make him the living replica of the Buddha in her cell. That far-away gaze so fascinated Winifred that she scarcely noticed the room and its furnishings, which in truth were luxurious only when compared with the spacious emptiness of the average Man-tze dwelling. The rich decoration, the barbaric splendor of carving, which exist in the wealthy Tibetan monasteries, were absent from this mountain fortress. On the whitewashed walls hung a few silk scrolls, embroidered or painted, some with likenesses of idols, some with Tibetan and Sanskrit inscriptions. A copper prayer-cylinder like a big churn

stood on the k'ang, or raised heated platform, near the handsomely carved teakwood table behind which the Khanbo-lama sat reading a huge-lettered scroll—the Buddhist scriptures. He spoke to Winifred without looking up.

"Are you a witch?" he chanted.

"No," answered Winifred, firmly, having swiftly decided on her answer.

She thought she saw a look of regret—warning—displeasure—on the face of her late cicerone, who lingered near the doorway. But she did not care to be challenged to prove her magic power before eyes blasé with all the miracles of the East. The two men before her had, for aught she knew, seen the strange things of the temples of L'hasa, of Bhotan and the cities of northern India: the fruit-bearing trees that grow from a seed in the space of a moment, the removal by some fanatic saint of his entrails before the horror-glutted eyes of an immense audience, their replacement, and the apparently instantaneous healing of the wound.

"I am but a woman," she repeated, "and wish to know why I have been brought to this monastery, which the foot of woman should not enter."

The Khanbo-lama unrolled his scriptures a little farther, and spoke as though reading from them: "Yet you charmed the Tu-tze. Never did he so behave about any woman. If we let you live, will you uncharm him?"

A sudden spark of amusement flashed in Winifred's eyes, breaking their glaze of fear. This, this it was which charmed *her* past uncharming, which drew her to these groping child-races still thrilling with the pressure of the Potter's hand upon the clay: their invincible sim-

plicity defeating their cunning, their superstition confounding their learning, their eyes big with awe before wonders of their own creation. "How can I uncharm him," she asked, almost gently, "when I am not near him?" Her heart throbbed violently for the comparative safety of his protection.

The Khanbo-lama skipped this inquiry, quite in the manner of civilized man when cornered by a woman. "Why did you not come," he asked, "on the day of the great rain, when he sent for you to be proclaimed his wife?"

"Because," like Michael she answered, "I am pledged to marry a man of my own country."

"Then you feel hate for the Tu-tze?"

"I did not say that."

Winifred never remembered exactly how it was that the Khanbo-lama could so authoritatively wave his hand and so quickly get the young would-be reformer out of the room, and, turning to her with so complete a dropping of the mask of deadness for the mixed cunning and frankness of the face of the shrewd business man, ask her, hurriedly:

"If we take you back to the Tu-tze, will you promise to destroy him? We will provide the means: powders in his food, or a knife-thrust while he sleeps—"

"Never, never!" cried Winifred, with the energy of horror. Somehow she had felt this thing was coming. A vision stood before her, more real against the white walls than the cold mystic evil face of the Khanbo-lama: a great, tall, kindly, confident boy, with teeth flashing in a boy's smile, shrewd eyes twinkling in merriment under the stern brow. Him she was asked

to kill, for the crime of loving her. She imagined herself, with a shudder, doing the deed—saw him eating and drinking, served by her hands—how happy it would make him!—and suddenly the ruddy color going from his face, the twinkle from his gray eye—his great sinewy body falling cold into her arms. Or perhaps sleeping trustfully at her feet, with deep satisfied breaths—which would stop in an instant, while she bent over him with her dagger he had long worn next his heart!

"A thousand times no!" she cried. No Jael she, nor Judith, nor even Esther—those bloody-handed Hebrew heroines who even in childhood had repelled her. "I wonder that you can ask such a thing, when it is forbidden by your religion to kill even the gnat that flies in your drinking-bowl. Take me back to the castle, and I will break my charm on the Tu-tze if I can; but harm him I will not. Who else can keep the Golok out? your priests?"

Her thrust had struck home. She had found the joint of the Khanbo-lama's armor—indecision. He gazed at her in silence, with a most mundane and un-Buddha-like frown of perplexity. "Take her back," he said, shortly, to the lean young lama, who answered his bronze bell so instantly that Winifred suspected he had never been very far away from the door.

When one thought about it afterward, in the safety of one's cell, away from the dormant deviltry in those fishy eyes, there was something comical in the position of this priestly Hamlet. How willingly would he kill her, if guaranteed against the wrath of the Tu-tze! how gladly dispatch the Tu-tze also, if the people could

be absolutely relied on not to resent it, or the Golok bound over to keep the peace!

But Winifred did not smile. As the winter days dragged tediously on in safe but tame fashion, with no recall to the Khanbo-lama's presence, no reappearance of the sharp-faced young lama, whom she suspected of friendliness, no rescue from the Tu-tze, or from Michael —though that was impossible (how impossible she did not know)—she took to weeping of nights. That meant so much for her. She cried as women cry who are ashamed of it—with the aching brow bent low, that the falling tears might leave no squalid streaks on the face; with the convulsed throat, the bitter water slowly gathering in the mouth, and the strange caving-in of the heart, that tugging sorrow that has no name.

Beside this living tomb, how light and easy her former captivity! Captivity! the idea was a farce there: a captivity with its exhilarating moonlight walks on the ramparts; with its daily visits from her quaint little dearly loved Daisy; with its delightful intermeddling in the affairs of a province; with its contact with a personality that piqued her interest more and more every day!

Here she had no resource but a window. It overlooked the unpaved rear of the monastery quadrangle, whose walls "backed up" against the mountains whose pine-crowned peaks always hid from her the winter sky. No one ever crossed it but an occasional solemn, shaven-headed scullion with a dish of refuse. The life of the yard was around by the front entrance. By bruising her face against her window-bars she could sometimes catch glimpses of short kilted red garments

flapping in the nipping wind against priestly legs, clad in pubboos—thick Tibetan boots—gay with stitched strips of bright-colored cloth; and, once, a poor wretch under condign punishment, slowly struggling along under the hateful Chinese wooden collar.

Winifred had often seen the cangue, but never without a shudder. It seemed to crush this man down. He could not hang his head any lower, for the brutal frame with its heavy wooden bolts, which permits a man neither to sit nor to lie down, forced it forward. But his whole attitude suggested despair. Winifred warmed with pity and indignation at the sight, which gave her the first inkling that these insolent churchmen most unconstitutionally detained other prisoners besides herself. How angry the Tu-tze would be, could he hear of it! "Who is lord of Somo?" he would ask, his eyes snapping, as on the first day of their meeting.

It was in vain she asked the greasy brother who brought her food—whom she mentally described as "Friar Tuck with all the Tuckishness left out"—for news of the Tu-tze or of Somo. Somehow she felt sure events were occurring in the world outside the loopholed wall of the lamaserai; otherwise those inside the walls would have had more leisure to devote to her case. The spitting of matchlocks was a frequent sound, both outside and inside the wall. Apparently some sort of a guards' camp was maintained outside the gates, to keep off Golok—or perchance a rescue party for the foreign woman. In the front of the yard they gathered daily for what seemed, from the sounds, a rough military drill, with much target-practice with spears and guns. One night a faint glare shone in pink stripes on the white wall

of her cell through the barred window, and she smelt smoke. A watch-fire on the mountain-top could only mean an invasion, actual or threatened. The atmosphere of disturbance could not be kept from her prison. It was in the very food she ate. She sobbed out loud one day, for the strangeness, the tension, and at the same time the tedium, of her life.

Steps in the outside courtyard, not far away, made her suddenly raise her wet cheek. She knew them. Dragging, dogged, a protest in each movement, she had often heard them beat the slow rhythm of captivity across the clattering stones around the angle. They stopped. She knew that stop too. She looked out and saw a pair of strong shoulders, artificially bowed by the heavy frame; and, as they wearily turned, a thing burst from her lips, even more foreign to her nature than the tears. It was a shriek.

"The Tu-tze!" she cried. Again she looked, to make sure, on the figure clad in peasant rags, robbed of the head-dress of authority, with stiff neck bowed to the yoke of penance. "Yet it is the Tu-tze!" she repeated, trembling in every limb from the shock. "How did you find me?" She felt suddenly safe.

The Tu-tze did not raise his head; she saw he could not, for the crushing collar. His voice, as he slowly spoke, startled her. It was lifeless as though it came from the tomb of hope.

"Who speaks?" he asked — listlessly! "Is it you, Woman with the Yellow Eyes?"

"Yes, it is I, Winifred." He had never heard her name before. "Are you also a prisoner of the lamas?"

He did not at first reply—he, who had loved so to talk

of himself!—nor express joy at the sight of her, or rather the sound, for the collar bent his head too low to see. Finally he muttered, in the same weary, dejected voice:

"So they took you themselves. I should have known they tricked me—me, the Tu-tze! who am always so alert. One sought me with the whisper that you had fled for protection against me to the lamas, and he would show me how to come secretly and take you. I could no longer live without you, so I went. Ill was the day!"

"Ill altogether was the day when you and I met, Tu-tze," said Winifred.

"I am not desirous of saying that," answered the Tu-tze. The ghost of the old snap in his tones made Winifred suspect that in the eyes forcibly bent away from her there was the ghost of the old twinkle. "But it was ill when you held out against me, instead of requiting my warm love. How happy we should be today! you giving me your counsel and served by all the Shang-Shang-ren even as myself, I coming in weary from the long ride or the battle with the wild men, to lay against my face your wondrous white one!"

"I did not come at first," he continued. "I thought you had run away and could not get far in the storm, and I had my people to look after, for the floods did great damage. The worst loss was the wetting and spoiling of the grain in one of the towers, which some pilfering rascal had left open to the rain. That meant shorter rations for all than ever, and greater grumbling. And all the time I was thinking of *you*," a little passion flickering into, then out of, his voice. "I was ready to put wooden collars on every man in Somo for not find-

ing you, for I did not then know how it hurt. Then one day there was something wailing inside me like a ghost, and I could no longer care whether the people starved, and I listened to the messengers of that lying Khanbo-lama (whose office I nevertheless duly respect, with all religion), and I stole out at night, alone, because I was ashamed to have it said that the Tu-tze was mad over a woman, and in a storm of sleet which kept me from being wary, and—how do I know what happened? Men rushed out, discharged guns, though not hitting me, seized and haled me off my mule, bound and carried me in here, where I live in a cell and wear a wooden collar all day and wait for death, you holding my great love in no regard all the while."

He stopped speaking. Winifred had never witnessed such a complete collapse of spirit. She thought instinctively of a dying roe-buck. It seemed heartrending, and—a piece of her own work. "Your people will rescue you," she suggested, compassionately.

"No. All do not know where I am. The Khanbo-lama is no fool. He has turned many of the Shang-Shang-ren against me. And who knows where my child is? They have killed him, doubtless, lest he learn to speak and rule the land; or sent him to some far Tibetan lamaserai to be a monk; or perhaps delivered him as a hostage to the Golok, who were beginning to harass the border when I came here. They will give me no news of him. Say no more. Let the Khanbo-lama kill us, but me first, for I could not endure to see pain come to you. I would have worn you on my breast as our women wear precious ornaments. Say no more."

She could not, for with the deep sounding of a bronze bell, which meant the close of a service and an outpouring of lamas into the courtyard, a priest who apparently had charge of the august prisoner dashed around the corner and unceremoniously hustled him out of sight. It was D'jen, the embryo Savonarola, and Winifred understood why she had been permitted the opportunity to talk with the Tu-tze.

Daily, after that, he brought the Tu-tze to her window, saying, with some dryness, that he was fulfilling the wishes of the Khanbo-lama, who had wished her to uncharm her victim. "Cheer your heart, Tu-tze," he exhorted. "The Khanbo-lama fears to kill you. The people love you, and the Koko-nor men are getting into the country, and who but the Tu-tze can beat them back?"

But the Tu-tze did not answer.

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He must be roused. From day to day he drooped, the deathly melancholy of the disappointed Asiatic settling on him like a fungus. Winifred was really intensely alarmed, for she had grown to passionately share the patriotism of this pugnacious little band of mountain tribes who for centuries have resisted the squeezing of an empire, and she realized that the hope of the Man-tze lay with their chief. But he did not seem to care. He cared only for one thing, to which he would allude with dejection—that he, the Tu-tze, had been taken in a snare like a sheep. "It comes from allowing oneself to get weak from loss of food," he said, bitterly. "That also was unworthy of a man of such understanding as mine."

"Had you not always enough food, Tu-tze?" asked Winifred, in astonishment.

"Well—there were many in the castle, and the people complained of it. So I always publicly sent you half my own portion, that they might have no cause to hate you, or to continue that absurd tale that you lived without food."

"Tu-tze," said Winifred, "there are not many men in your country like you. In my country there are not too many. I want you to tell me something I have long desired to know. Why, when you could at any time have made me your wife against my will, did you not do it?"

There was surprise in the Tu-tze's voice. "Did you not appeal to the custom of the Shang-Shang-ren, the custom of our fathers, for each maiden to choose her lover? That touched me. Likewise I was afraid. I had not seen a woman like you. Then those stories you told me—the men in them seemed weak, but I could see that you were used to such men, so I was weak, that you might love me more."

"Tell me another thing. My servant Lot—I may know now where he is? Not dead, Tu-tze?"

"No, only kept a prisoner in the castle. He had fresh air constantly," hastily.

"Wearing a wooden collar?" asked Winifred, softly.

The head, already bent over its wooden yoke, seemed to hang lower, though it was only the note in the Tu-tze's voice. "At—at first," he murmured. "I did not know it hurt so. After a while I ordered it taken off, that he might praise me to you as a noble and clement ruler. But how do I know now how he fares, or my own faithful Kwoh whom they have imprisoned,

or my only son? A frocked thing sits in my judgment-seat in Somo castle, trying to keep off the Koko-nor men and rule the Shang-Shang-ren with his charred shoulder-blades and flowers of butter!" A despair impossible of description quivered in his voice. "No, say no more. I see more than you, and at nights when the mountains burn red, I wonder whether it is watch-fires to warn off the enemy, or the burning roofs of my brave Shang-Shang-ren."

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The caked snow under the spring sun had begun to slide down the mountain-sides with a rushing sound. Winifred was accustomed to be wakened by it at night, and to sit up wondering for a moment, in an absurd hope that the people had come for their chief, and that it was their battering at the gates she heard. But to-night it *was* battering at the gates, and the rush was that of many feet, made leaden by panic—and amid the clank of spears, the clomping of mules' and yaks' feet, the guttural cries of men, and the shriller ones of women, rose the terrible shriek of affrighted infancy. All Somo village was hasting up-and-down-mountain to the monastery, man and wife and child and live-stock. And after them, afar, more dreadful than the wail of the children, sounded other feet, those of man and beast in fierce pursuit, wild cries such as the plainsman uses, the spitting of matchlocks, which brought a fierce murmur of fear from the hunted villagers.

"Open!" they sobbed and screamed, beating at the gates while the sleepy porters fumbled. "The Golok! the Golok! the witch! give her to them! Where is the Tu-tze? The Golok! tell him they are upon us!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE SEED OF THE POMEGRANATE.

> "He takes the cleft pomegranate seeds;
> 'Love, eat with me, this parting day;'
> Then bids them fetch the coal-black steeds—
> 'Demeter's daughter, wouldst away?'"

THE Khanbo-lama gnawed his nails, and the fingers under them. No resemblance to the gilt Buddha on Winifred's wall was at the moment apparent. Agitated shaven heads pressed about him, like fierce bees about their drone. And outside, roughly as the bear attacks the hive, bellowed and beat the monster man most fears —his fellow-man, in numbers and in wrath. It was a startling awakening, for the chief lama as well as for his prisoners.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked, uncertainly, as much of the agonized voices which summoned him through the deep loophole windows as of the monks.

"Something," said a young lama called D'jen, impatiently.

"The Pure One hears what they clamor for," said an old ecclesiastic. "They call for the Tu-tze to come and rescue them from the Golok. They taunt him with hiding here beneath our skirts, while the barbarian holds his castle and his son. They call also for the witch, who shows men how to live without eating, to

be given to the Golok, who promise that they will then go away appeased. Others of the people call us to come out and fight, for the barbarians are in great numbers. Something must be done quickly, Most Pure One, or else Man-tze and Golok together will pour in and slay us."

"I will do it, I will do it," said the Khanbo-lama, hurriedly. "But which would be best?"

The soul of D'jen the lama fairly pranced, but of them all he only remembered to bow his head respectfully before he spoke. Haste and terror dissolve forms among men, even those of reverence to a living Buddha. "Take the wooden collar from the Tu-tze's neck," he burst out, with dilated eyes. "Let him scatter those wild dogs back to their burrows."

"Returning to punish us," dissented several voices. "Remember the slaughter of holy men when he came into his own!"

The crashing of spears, stones, billets of wood, and desperate hands and bodies of men on the gates, drowned the Khanbo-lama's reply. What doubled the force of the onslaught was that the frightened gate-keepers in their confusion had shut the portals too quickly, leaving out a number of the villagers themselves, and were now afraid to reopen them lest they let in the Golok too. Pressed closer and closer to the wall by the shouting enemy, the frantic Man-tze, many of them women and children, dashed themselves against the crude yet impregnable masonry, sending their shrieks over it like missiles.

"The witch!" they screamed. "Give her to them! Let her show them how to live without food, for she has not shown us."

"Will the Most Pure One give the order?" besought a white-lipped lama.

"But," responded their spiritual head, doubtfully, "the Tu-tze would have a shaven head in every cage in his province. He esteems the foreign woman beyond all religion."

"Not if we deliver him also to the Golok, bound and collared as he is, and rid ourselves of two troubles at once."

"But the people love him," objected the Khanbo-lama.

They were howling now with a voice like the boom of the sea: "Where is the Tu-tze? Is even the Khanbo-lama dead? Will no one save us or our children?"

The Khanbo-lama gave an abrupt order, then hurried out to the mob in the courtyard, without stopping, as did most of his followers, to arm with matchlock and spear. Like many vacillating persons, he was not deficient in brute courage, and like most, when he did nerve himself to action it was to a rash one, for whose execution his hot impatience could hardly wait.

The weak white dawn of a day scarcely born showed a confused camp of men and women, yak and sheep, goats and babies, with household effects strewn all over the stones of the courtyard. "Where is our chief?" they yelled at sight of him. "Have you killed our chief? Where is the witch? Give her to the Golok, and save us!"

The lama merely looked at them to demand silence. He got it. There was something hypnotic in his cold intense abstracted gaze, and the slight sneer on his well-

chiseled features quite restored his resemblance to a Buddha image. "Your chief is here," he said, indifferently—"among you, and you have not noticed him—the man with the collar."

The noise of the crowd arose again. It was a murmur of astonishment. A dejected figure garbed in brown woolen like themselves, with hands bound behind his back, and head bowed by the great clog, the symbol of disgrace, was indeed before them, and in him who would recognize the Tu-tze?

"That is the sort of ruler you have," said the Khanbo-lama, contemptuously. "A trapped mouse, a nothing. He does not lift his voice to address you, he cannot move a finger to aid you. A woman brought him to this. She is here also," and he motioned toward Winifred, whom a priestly guard was bringing out.

She had never looked more beautiful. Danger does that, for gallant souls. The fierce cries for her had penetrated her windows too. More ragged in her long-worn garments than the poorest woman there, she held herself erect, with yellow eyes bright as wine-bubbles, and chestnut curls enhaloing her prison-pale face, which the Tu-tze could not see. But he heard her step, and he uttered a groan.

"Ask the Tu-tze what you shall do with her," said the Khanbo-lama, spitefully. "She is his woman, not ours. We are holy men and meddle not with women or government." He felt deeply relieved at this inspiration, which removed his responsibility from whatever was done.

But the people did not shout at once. Winifred had lived among them for months. Now that they saw her,

she did not seem a witch. And something distracted their attention—a man's head, then his body, appearing over the wall—and they did not touch off the matchlocks pointed instantly his way, because he was evidently a Man-tze, one of the luckless contingent left outside the gates. He waved a khata, which gained for him attention.

"The Golok chief sends by me a message," he began. "He finds there is no pasturage, yet sees that we have lived and thriven through the winter. He wants her whose magic wrought it. Give her over, and they will remove their tents and depart to the Koko-nor country, evacuating the castle and restoring the Tu-tze's son."

"My son!" hoarsely exclaimed a voice over the wooden yoke. "They have seized my son!"

"And I," said a clear woman's voice, "I send the chief of the Golok a message. Tell him I am no witch."

"No, no!" cried the villagers, relenting. "She is no witch. Has she not healed our babes when sick?"

"And is not that magic?" called out a lama.

"Tell him," Winifred continued, "that the reason the Man-tze did not starve was because their noble and prudent ruler made them store up food in the towers against famine-time. Tell him to go back to the Koko-nor country and rule his people as wisely and fatherly as the Tu-tze of Somo, and he will have no need to disturb the peace of other tribes."

"Well said!" cried the people, and anxiously waited for the emissary to bear his message and return.

But those near him saw that he was white and trembling when—presumably on a ladder of shoulders—he

regained the wall. "Oh, Man-tze men, oh, Tu-tze, give her over!" he cried, wringing his hands. "For the Golok captain, unmoved, declares that if he cannot have the witch, whose words are no more to be believed than those of any other sorceress, not a roof but shall be burnt, not a man shall be left living, not a woman but shall be a captive, and he will send word this hour to the castle, which his men hold, to rend in pieces the Tu-tze's son!"

"My son!" burst again from the man with the collar. His hands twisted convulsively against their binding-cords.

"It is the Tu-tze's to say," said the Khanbo-lama, deliberately. "The son is his, the witch is his, the Man-tze are his—the Golok many."

Winifred turned her face to the Tu-tze. "Then sacrifice me," she tried to say, but she could not. The ferocious cries of the outside savages, their shoulder-dashes against the gates, which sounded like the beating of a bad heart, struck a terror deadly and unaltruistic into her soul. Death—yes; but not more captivity!

All eyes turned upon the Tu-tze. It would have been dangerous for any lama to have laid a finger upon him, struggling though he was to break the thongs on his hands. They twisted and curled round the cords; their distorted veins came out blue and furious against the bare writhing arm, subdued spluttering groans, at which not even a lama laughed, coming up deep from his tortured soul. Had there been any use, some bold hand from the mob would have flashed out a knife and cut the cords for him. But what could he do, hampered by that crushing collar?

"Give them tne witch, Tu-tze!" cried a woman with little ones of her own, tears streaming down her face at the thought of them.

"No," shouted several voices, "the boy. He cannot speak, he is no good. And the foreign woman is so fair."

"No good!" leapt from the Tu-tze's lips. "My son, my little runaway, my life's brightness—they shall not touch him; I will slay the whole world first!"—and, to free one finger, he struggled like a Samson Agonistes. But the monks knew how to tie knots.

"The witch, then!" cried out the Khanbo-lama, suddenly radiant. "Open the gates and give her to the Golok."

One syllable of fear, which she had been desperately pressing back, burst involuntarily from Winifred.

"Sooner give thee living to dogs, Khanbo-lama though thou art!" cried the Tu-tze, wildly, with the violence of the impotent; and as the lama looked significantly at the porters, a sudden inspiration of strength shook his frame. There was a sound like the report of a gun, and with free hands, cut into bleeding stripes by the thongs which lay broken on the ground, he grasped and tore at the wooden collar round his neck, as though to break it.

That was impossible; but a murmur of admiration, of hope, broke from the people, and the Khanbo-lama's slit-eyes grew anxious. The Tu-tze, himself perfectly silent, and amid a stillness on which the yells and drum-beats of the savage enemy outside jarred strangely, pulled, splendidly straining, at the collar. No man could break it; yet—the Khanbo-lama nodded to the

"The Tu-tze reached out for a weapon—and then suddenly turned."

porters; they slid the immense bolts, the gates swung open, the amazed and relieved Man-tze poured in from outside, and, on their heels, unhindered, a frantic horde of shaggy, sheepskin-clad tribesmen, brandishing lance in one hand and matchlock in the other, their ponies' bridles in their teeth, rendering more unintelligible the shrill battle-cries with which they woke the mountain echoes. Deliberately, and to further his own ambitions, the Man-tze Khanbo-lama had let the enemy into the stronghold.

And as he dimly realized his own rashness, something heavy and flying struck him in the face with staggering force—half of a stout wooden frame, which had broken with a crack louder than that of the breaking thongs. The other half, amid the shouts of the people, was flung in the face of the first advancing flanks of the enemy, who fell back an instant from the entrance.

The Tu-tze reached out an impetuous hand for a weapon—and then suddenly turned. To a woman with yellow eyes, whose like he had never seen before, he strode quickly, and, before either she or any one else had realized his intention, seized her in his arms. And then it was too late to let her go, for the Golok were hot and close upon them both, stuffing their nostrils with smoke, blinding them with dazzling spear-thrusts in the sun, pressing Winifred's white face against his own.

* * * * * * *

She was one of the few women who have witnessed a battle. Greeks and Turks had closed in deadly conflict before her eyes, while, clinging to Victor's arm, she had

watched the struggle from the safe vantage of a neighboring hill-top; and in Mexico she had seen sharp brushes with Yaqui Indians. But this was different; this she could not see, but was part of. "Are you there, Heart of me?" the Tu-tze would murmur, bending his released neck, intoxicated by the brush of her curls on his cheeks out of all thought of her spirit's aloofness.

Even while he spoke she could feel his great shoulder jerk as he threw a spear, or hear the buzz of the bullets about their heads, audible always even in the Babel of the strange savage strife in which the boom of the cannon was not missed. This time her own feet were treading on bodies, the dead and the living—the latter more horrible—as the Tu-tze fought his one-handed way down the mountain, nearly as hampered by her weight as he had been by the collar, his fierce eyes seeing red, his fond lips crooning, "Are you there, Heart of me?"

And around her the sickening stench of staling powder mingled with that of raw human flesh, streaming human blood—man's most devilish handiwork insolently destroying the Creator's noblest. Behind her, over the Tu-tze's shoulder, the Man-tze were flying, in a transport of recovered courage, every man seeing red like his leader, every woman at least carrying a matchlock for her lord, and even the monks following after, with kilts full of stones when other weapons lacked, remembering that they were Man-tze as well as churchmen.

And before them the Golok were flying too, in panic such as no hope could have imagined. Like the Moors at the dead face of the Campeador, they fled from the

mere name of the Tu-tze, and from his hand, which by a lucky first spear-throw had slain their leader, and from the white witch-woman clinging around his neck, whispering magic secrets of warfare into his ear. For they were but shells of men, these famine-stricken Tibetans, whose hollow eyes and sunken cheeks belonged half to death, even before the Tu-tze charged upon them.

"It is like fighting autumn leaves," said the Tu-tze, stopping a moment to get breath, while his yelling tribesmen swept ahead and the demoralized enemy never looked behind to miss him. "But there is the castle yet to be regained. They would never have gained it, had I not slain my splendid dogs."

Winifred's arms had fallen from his neck. "Did you break the wooden collar?" she asked, looking at him strangely.

The Tu-tze's lids flickered. "The people say so," he answered. "It is good that they should say so. I had been gnawing at it for many days — my teeth are strong—and once in a while, when they sent me D'jen for jailor, I had the use of my hands and my dagger. It was well-nigh ready to break, but we will not mention that."

"Tu-tze," said a tribesman who had been trying for a long time to attract his attention, "there is a tall old man who wishes to speak to you. He came into the country ten days ago, through the passes left open by the Golok. He has with him a guide who speaks many tongues, Tibetan among them, and a train of baggage animals. He is a holy man of some religion, though not ours, and he wants his son."

"Many men will be wanting their sons after this day's work is done," said the Tu-tze, setting his lips firmly. "I will have no time to see strangers until the Golok are swept from the country."

"But the baggage animals bear much grain and other food stores, all of which he says he will give for news of his son."

"Take it from him," said the Tu-tze, incisively, "and let him in return choose a son out of all who may survive this day's fight. I will be a son to him myself, though not greatly drawn to holy men.—This is no place for you," he said, turning abruptly to Winifred. "They throw behind them darts which are sometimes poisoned, and I—cannot fight, with your face so near me. Take her to the tower, D'jen. That is a high and safe place. Stay there till I come for you."

The young lama, who had been fighting at his side in almost a frenzy of courage, demurred. They stayed boys long, these Man-tze.

"Never mind," said the Tu-tze. "Guard her as your life, and you shall be head of the monastery if the Khanbo-lama dies—and I think he will die."

He alertly caught the bridle of a riderless Tibetan pony near by, pressed the short stirrups to its side, and was in an instant a speck, indistinguishable at their distance among the mass of charging tribesmen who drove the Golok toward the town.

"You will influence the Tu-tze for me?" asked D'jen, eagerly, as they, also taking riderless horses, dashed on toward the tower. "You will marry the Tu-tze?"

"I will marry the Tu-tze," repeated Winifred, softly. —"I love the Tu-tze," she added, gratuitously. Her

eyes shone bright as on the day she had sought his castle to kill him.

* * * * * * *

She had known it before he had burst his bonds asunder to save her and his people, so the glamour of that deed had not confused her judgment; before the amazing moment when, in presence of priests, people and descending foe, he had seized and pressed her to his craving heart, so that the mere victory of physical magnetism, the everlasting response of woman's weakness to man's boldness, had not kindled the fire; before —oh, now that she examined her heart, long must she have loved the Tu-tze before, in the lamas' courtyard, he had appealed to her compassion as a lion sickening in captivity!

The tears, the band of pain around the heart—she knew now what had caused them, and caused the warm joyous feeling of deliverance which had welled up in her being the moment she had recognized him in the Man with the Collar. She laid her face in her tingling hands, but neither cooled the other. Of the world which would—should it ever hear of her inconceivable act—call it an infatuation, a reversion, a degradation, she scarcely thought, nor of Michael Traquair. For him she knew she had never felt one moment's love or pretence of love; she had leaned on him, which is quite another thing, and leaned in vain, for he had not come for all her looking to the east. But the Tu-tze had come, and had taken her in his arms—

She paced the roof of the tower, whence she could see the fighting at the castle gates, and impatiently longed for it to end, for that moment's burning joy to

be repeated. Old Persian lines throbbed in her memory; she flung out her arms as in surrender, and whispered them to the secretly, gently smiling sky, which had seen her run from this man in fear:

> "As soon as the hero stood upon the terrace,
> The Peri-faced maiden ran to greet him,
> And took the hand of the hero in her own;
> And they went like those that are overcome with wine."

Every woman has an arrogant dream of being loved with barbaric fierceness, volcanic passion, to give her the new sensation whose quest keeps the patient world in spirits. Then it is known to sometimes burn out—but she felt she knew the Tu-tze.

She was here, in his tower, perfectly free at last to leave his dominion now, for he had not come for her yet, and D'jen was the most erratic and negligent of warders, spending much time away gathering news, with the notched-wood ladder left trustfully under the tower's high door. The Tu-tze had won back the castle—"with much slaughter," he added, relishingly—and found his son alive and well, and Kwoh also.

"The Golok were in ill luck," he added, grinning. "The lamas when they seized Somo castle imprisoned Kwoh, who had tried to hold it. The Golok set him free for being their prisoner, and he turned around and fought against them, as did also your white servant, whom the Tu-tze imprisoned so long ago—"

"Oh!" cried Winifred. "Lot! he is alive!"

"—And three strange white men, whom, with a girl, they had brought as captives of their own. The lives of these had been spared on condition they should use

their guns—a new kind, not like our matchlocks—against the Man-tze, and they did so; but they also killed the Golok at every chance, taking from one of them a belt and bag of coins, which doubtless they wanted for necklaces for the girl. These men were mighty fighters, though one of them is Chinese. They escaped before the Tu-tze could take them prisoners."

She scarcely heeded the sense of his words. What to her were the prisoners of the Golok, whom the Tu-tze was hunting back to the hills? "Why does not the Tu-tze come here?" she asked, restlessly. Three days had passed.

"The Tu-tze has much to do," said D'jen. "The Golok still linger in hiding-places. The people are in disorder. They would rather quarrel with one another over who was bravest in defeating the barbarian than set to work sowing their crops, and there is also much hunger in the country-side, as well as dressing of wounds and disposal of the dead to be attended to."

He handed her a spy-glass at her feet—the Tu-tze's. Doubtless he had brought it up into the tower and swept the country with it, in vain search for her. Through it she saw the Tu-tze moving here, there, and everywhere, save near the tower; hearing grievances, passing in and out of dwellings, distributing supplies of grain and skins of butter, lifted down from the backs of the weariest-looking mules Winifred had ever seen.

"Taken from the foreign holy man," explained D'jen. "The Tu-tze sent him word that he defrauded no man, and that if the venerable one would abide with us until the next crop grows and is gathered, he will be

repaid. 'As to sons, I cannot make them,' our ruler added, reasonably. But the aged one, who speaks no Man-tze, still wanders, looking for his son.—Did I tell you the Khanbo-lama was dead?"

"Was it the Golok killed him?"

D'jeṅ looked slightly like the Tu-tze for a minute. "Who else would impiously kill a holy priest?" he asked, gravely.

"Has the Tu-tze come here at night, while I slept, and gone away?" asked Winifred, the next day.

But her guardian shook his head. "He has not come at all. He is pursuing the Golok—"

"'Or sleeping, or on a journey,'" said Winifred, a little bitterly. "He seems to have forgotten—us. If you see him—"

She checked herself. She had been on the verge of sending him a message. And the tears, that had begun to be strangers to her shining eyes, commenced to creep back to them. It seemed so strange that he did not come—stranger than that she should love him. He was alive, for she saw him; ever dispersing little idle knots of spearmen, ever dispensing household rations to the handsome Amazons who had fought beside and for him, —was that it? did he think of her as a fair useless being, not fit for the wife of a Tu-tze?—ever arming to punish the last remnants of the Bana invaders, never turning his steps to the tower.

Like an image slowly turning to stone, Winifred sat very still at her window, from which, with the glass, she could see the Tu-tze. Like all other women forsaken, she hoped piteously, argued to herself defiantly, then suddenly broke under the realization of what had

come to her. And unlike them, she could not arraign or blame the man. Even a civilized man little prizes a message of relenting come too late; witness Michael Traquair. And to the Tu-tze she had sent no such message, and when he asked, "Are you there, Heart of me?" she had vouchsafed no answer.

She crept numbly away from the window, alone in all Asia at last, alone in all the world. Become a dried crone,—conventionalized at last, perhaps, her gipsy eye dimmed,—she would look back to this wound to her life, and say it was kind surgery, babble of differences of race, caste, education, instincts—all that the Tu-tze, wise and noble ruler as she had owned him, had thought of sooner than she, sooner than she!

D'jen's voice in the middle of the night startled her wakefulness. "Is it the Tu-tze?" she cried, springing up.

"No. A woman. With a message."

So, he had only been seeking among the women one worthy to bear a message to her. "Send her up," she breathed.

A young girl's quick feet were heard clattering up the tower steps, and Candace Roberts stepped through the familiar opening into the tower.

"Lot said you were here!" she cried. "Oh, my dear lady! We had thought never to see you! Mr. Traquair sends such love! He has gone through so much for you!"

Winifred looked at her. Tall, and too slender—for the Bana prisoners had assuredly fared no better in hunger-time than their captors—handsome, yet hollow-eyed, with pencil-shadows under the dark-gray eyes,

her fingers frail as fan-sticks, she seized and kissed the elder woman's shaking hand. "How can we get away?" she asked. "Does the Tu-tze keep as close guard of you as ever? Mr. Traquair tried to shoot him, but could never touch him."

Winifred's lips moved, without Candace hearing what they said. The astonishment was so complete; the wrenching awry of her heart's plans so fully accomplished. "Michael!" she at last murmured. "Has he come? have you come? how?"—and, oh, Candace, why?

"Through Tibet," said Candace, with studied nonchalance, yet catching her breath with excitement. "China was in flood, and the Viceroys refused passports, so we came by way of India across the Chang."

"Tibet! but scarcely any foreigners penetrate into it."

"Mr. Traquair wished to save you," said the girl, simply. Made to sit down, she told the story of their struggle across the Forbidden Land, their capture by the Bana men, when helpless with the cold, and their detention with them as prisoners all through the winter and spring.

"The hunger was the worst of it," said the girl, with a shiver, "for they had little food for themselves or us. Each day we thought they would kill us, and Mr. Traquair would comfort me so kindly, and promise to hold my hand if he could until it all was over. But after a while we found the Bana chief was quite pleased to have foreign prisoners. He thought he would get rich ransom from our tribe, for the rupees he took from Mr. Traquair seemed like great wealth to him. And one of his men said it brought good luck to have a

white-faced foreign woman in the camp; that the Man-tze of Somo had one who was a witch, and showed them how to live without food or drink. We never dreamed they meant you! And Lambert made them laugh, he would caper and sing so loudly, though his heart was sick for thinking of his father, who could not speak Tibetan and was left behind. And Mr. Traquair—oh, how wonderful it must be to be loved by such a man! so brave, so cheery, so kind!"

"They are the men we love, Candace," said Winifred, catching her breath.

"When spring came the Tibetans were restless, men and horses, and they ranged farther and farther to the southeast, but we did not know we were in Somo till we reached the town, and then Mr. Traquair and Lin and Lambert fought like tigers to help take the castle, thinking you were in it. When the Tu-tze wrested it from the Golok, we four escaped in the confusion, meeting Lot outside, and have been waiting for days to communicate with you. With what joy will you see Mr. Traquair! What shall I tell him?"

"Tell him," said Winifred, in a slow faltering voice, "tell him I kiss his hands—his feet."

"I do not think he would care for that. They kiss lips, do they not? not hands or feet."

"How much you have learned since I last saw you! —Tell him that if I had a thousand lives and souls, they should by duty—no, don't say 'duty'—go to him. Tell him he so honors me that he shames me." Her eyes glowed dark and sad; her voice trembled passionately. "Tell him that when he calls or—or comes—I

will fulfill my word and go with him, as his own, wherever he may will."

"Why, will the Tu-tze let you?"

"I think so," bitterly. "Tell Michael all I have bidden you, will you not? Make it clear to him how utterly I am his, how humbly I beg his forgiveness for all in me that has ever been unworthy of such love and effort, for all that has been—that has been—un—unwilling—"

"Why, Mrs. Blaize, you are weeping!"

Mrs Blaize! how strange that name sounded! how long since she had heard it! nor was it now hers. It belonged to the part of her life buried with Victor, who had said, "Marry him; he must be a man or you could not love him." True, Victor! and so was this other a man, no less than you yourself! and she, of the gipsy eye and the light soul, had had the love of three such men outpoured on her.

The cruel compulsion to share our dark things, the desperate clutch for a fellow-woman's sympathy, seized her. "Candace," she whispered, suddenly grasping the little thin hand, "I love the Tu-tze. Michael must never know."

"Love him? You mean—you are married to him?" She could think of nothing else.

"No. This is a world in which we can love those we do not marry, and even marry those we do not love. Never love, Candace! oh, the pain of it! and yet the joy and glory of it!"

"The pain of it!" echoed the young girl, dreamily, with star-eyes shining into Winifred's own. Wholly different in physical characteristics as in everything else,

for the moment they looked like sisters, irradiated with the same emotion.

"Then it is too late! then you know!"

Candace Roberts turned from her, not as a slave from a mistress, but as queen might rebuff queen. "I will bear your message," she said, distantly, and swiftly disappeared down the ladder.

The next day the man who had forgotten her rode back into town, preceded by excited spearmen who announced that the Golok were now gone from the country indeed, for out of a body of twenty the Tu-tze and Kwoh had left but two to retreat. Winifred wondered whether her disappearance would add a drop of gall to that cup of triumph. She would never know. She would vanish as his love had vanished, "like snow upon the desert's dusty face."

She saw him talking to a pretty fresh Man-tze girl, obviously a-flutter with excitement at being noticed by the chief. She had been carrying a stone water-vessel, and now lifted it to his lips. Winifred blushed for the gnawing at her heart. Yet she felt she must run down the ladder and address the girl.

"What did the Tu-tze say to you?" she demanded, feeling her face a book to the bright saucy eyes.

"He sent me to you, great woman," answered the girl, respectfully. "He wants you."

"Wants me?"

Winifred's feet almost impeded their haste by their haste. The girl led her to a skin tent—spoil of the Golok—at whose entrance stood the Tu-tze, who spoke as though they had parted but yesterday,—or never. But his brow was knotted.

"We had a last struggle with them," he said, bluffly—"I think, drove them back. But an arrow struck Kwoh; it was, I fear, poisoned. You know so much—"

Without waiting for him to finish, Winifred flew to the man who lay on the earth floor of the tent, his head on a pillow of budding boughs, his eyes glassed over with fever. The Tu-tze's last request should be heeded. She bent her head to the arm with its ugly jagged tear.

"What are you doing?" cried the Tu-tze. "Will it hurt you?"

Winifred shook her head. "It will save him," she answered, in a moment. "I am sucking out the poison."

The Tu-tze brushed his beaded brow with his hand, and plunged outside as if for air. Returning to the doorway, he spoke, and the tone of his voice made Winifred twist her head to look at him. His eyes were glassier than Kwoh's.

"Would you—could it be done for me too?" he asked. "For I too"—he drew his arm out of his loose Tibetan coat. Winifred almost screamed sharply at the sight of the raw wound, scraped and slightly bleeding, on the strong splendid arm.

She buried her face against it,—the arm that had defended her from death by a trampling mob of demons,—clung to it in recollection of that moment, while she laid her lips to the wound. They seemed to have no strength, for the fear that was sickening her heart. The struggle of years, the triumph of to-day, the conquest of a proud woman—all this, for him to ignominiously die of a coward's poisoned weapon, leaving his people the prey of invaders! to fall at her feet, her splendid tree, her soul's kinsman whom she had known too late, toward whom

she yearned as hearts have eternally yearned, in the deep elemental relation of the Man and the Woman, that walks stately before the God who made it, true to His making, unadorned and unashamed beneath all tinsel fripperies with which a peevish knowledge has decked it.

"You must lie down!" she sobbed; but he stubbornly refused.

In agony she raised her face, to meet the thrilled gaze of his eyes. She put her hand to his heart, that leaped into it at the touch; another hand to his brow. It felt clammy. He collapsed.

"I *am* ill," he murmured. "My heart—touch it again."

"It feels strong," she said, wondering. "Perhaps the poison had not time to reach it."

"Poison!" he said. He sat up weakly, then stumbled to his feet. "I am sick with something else," he said. "I think it is the thought of you, looking at me with your yellow eyes, yet forever scorning me. I was not pierced like Kwoh. I scratched that wound myself, with your dagger, but a moment ago." For an instant his eyes had the familiar gleam. "Kwoh is my right hand, but I could not have your face lying on his arm, your head on his heart, and not on mine."

"But I thought you did not care?"

He did not speak at all. He only looked, for an answer, and stretched out his arms, as he had done when he had broken and flung aside the collar. Winifred knew the one thing she must do. She rushed to the doorway. But the Tu-tze was standing there before her. She could not pass the gaze of his eyes. She did not wish to. He could not speak. She did not wish

him to. Not compelled now by the spear's point, yet compelled, she laid her head where the collar had pressed cruelest, and his face felt the bloom and softness of her white one. He did not hear the moving of men's feet in the doorway of the tent; but a sudden ejaculation, in a tongue strange to him, made him look up quickly.

Three strange faces confronted him—and the muzzles of two rifles. "What is this?" he asked, sharply; and the woman in his arms turned and looked too.

"The men of my country," she said, faintly.

CHAPTER XXI.

"AND DEEP INTO THE DYING DAY THE HAPPY PRINCESS FOLLOWED HIM."

"THOSE whom you love better than me?" abruptly asked the Tu-tze, calmly ignoring the rifles. His heart beat stormily against hers.

"There are no men whom I love more than you," breathed Winifred, clinging to him more closely, and feeling it somehow base in her to do so, with Michael Traquair's eyes burning behind her.

She of course spoke in Man-tze, but tones too form a language, and from the nerveless hands of Lambert Love a rifle dropped foolishly, with a jarring clatter. It was a wonder it did not explode. But neither Michael Traquair's eyes nor his thoughts swerved—nor the finger that lay on the trigger of his own firearm. They were patient eyes, that had waited for her thirteen years, and even now, instead of reproaching, waited an answer at her pleasure to one tremendous question. She slipped her arms from the Tu-tze's neck, only in sudden fear to replace them, with a thought so obvious as to strike speech like a spark from the dry lips of her British lover.

"My God!" he said, in the voice of some one else. "Winifred, are you in that man's arms willingly?"

"Yes," she said. "Shoot," she said, miserably. He

would never understand, never feel, never see. Despair for this, and deepest despair of all for the cut to the soul which she now could never heal, though on his breast she lay forever in the surrender of death, bowed her head—but on the breast of the other.

Traquair very softly laid his rifle down beside Lambert's, folded his empty arms, and gazed at Winifred. He was not trying to be magnificent; he was only a plain man, dumbfounded under a staggering blow. He was looking at a woman who had called a man to throw away his future, to cross a continent, an ocean, and a waste and hostile country, to suffer for her cold and hunger and captivity and humiliation, that he might see her turn to a barbarous pagan with the look with which

> "The new-made bride
> Turns to her lord, her own, her first of men."

And he was trying to feel like the man.

"It is as well," he said, with great distinctness, "that I did not excite the United States Government over this matter."

Scarcely any man could have said less. A thousand bitter passions rose and glittered in that gaze which scorched Winifred, to burn out, even in their rising, to ashes more bitter. Why, one should laugh!—merrily, if possible; loudly, at all events. What was Lambert the laughter-maker thinking of, to stand pale and trembling at the knees, staring at Winifred in that smitten manner? Laugh, man, and silence the cackling gods! But he could not laugh at a woman; O he could not laugh at Winifred!

"Mikey," said Lambert, in a low voice, "wake up. This is worse than the Banas. Pick up your rifle. Do something."

"Do what?" asked Traquair, still slowly. He asked it of Winifred.

The Tu-tze too put a question. "What are they saying?" he asked. "Why do they not go? Why did they come? I have not seen men like them before."

His keen gray gaze flashed over the three of them. What he saw best was two tall men, tall as he, who overtopped his by no means stately fellow-countrymen. But they wore their sheepskins without the esprit of a native, and their features seemed to him poorly shaped. At the smallest man of the three he scarcely glanced. Winifred had never seen two men in such contrast: both strong, both self-mastered, the one with acquired, the other with inherited power. The Anglo-Saxon's square-built, close-trimmed figure held itself erect in the presence of an enemy, with head bared in the presence of a woman who had outraged him. All the longish soft brown hair that hung unkempt about his lean resolute face was unable to feminize it. It was such a face as, across either ocean, won instant confidence and liking: its frank, clean-cut features, the square, earnest set of the mouth, the lines on brow and cheek which showed that Life had commenced to write there—most wanton, most conscienceless of scribblers, nnable to pass any fair surface without defacing it with her worthless autograph.

It was the face of a man who had foregone the Homeric life, the joy of its gigantic loves and hates, for the greater joy that was set before him. A sudden

sharp admiration stirred in the woman; but not in the Tu-tze.

"Had I known they were like this I would never have feared your preferring them to me," he said, contemptuously. "Bid them go."

"No, Tu-tze," said Winifred, firmly. "They are my countrymen, and shall be well and courteously treated until they go of their own free will. They are to have a room—not a dungeon—in the castle itself, that the strong hand of the Tu-tze may protect them. Never mind why they came from so far. Why did I come?"

"To take away my rulership, I think," said the Tu-tze, with delight. "Bold as our Man-tze girls are, I have not heard one so speak to a muleteer as you to the Tu-tze. I never thought to like such words!"

"Michael," said Winifred, tremblingly, in English, "I will get speech with you in some way. You can depend on me. And I will explain—" Her voice broke. "You must stay in the castle till then."

It was the Professor who spoke. "As your prisoners?" he asked, affably. "There are three more of us, you know—Lin the Chinaman, and my guide Ba'ron, who brought me and my baggage-train safely through the Bana country by telling every one I was a living Buddha under a vow of silence, and Candace—"

"For Heaven's sake, Winifred, I ask one thing!" burst out Traquair. They all started to hear his voice. "Not for myself, but for Candace. Keep her near you as long as may be. The poor child has been so long herded up with us men, against every propriety she will some day hear of"—he spoke through

his teeth—"spare all the gall from her young cup you can."

"She shall stay with me," said Winifred, looking at him rather searchingly.

Once in the castle, in one of the vast unfurnished upper rooms which had little but their altitude to distinguish them from dungeons, the Professor placidly fell to copying the inscription on a prayer-cylinder affixed to the wall. Lambert's hand touched the other man's gently. "Mikey," he said, "I think you are the finest. I know you are the finest. To say no word—"

"Word!" Traquair flung off the hand. "Would words burn and slash and kill, and dash with infernal heathen face against the stones, that—uncivilized—" The hot phrases dried and rattled in his throat. "Fine? I? I tell you I'm rotting with every black thought a man ever crushed down in him. Any other Englishman, any other civilized being, I could bear; but—That!"

"Yes, but you crush them down. Why don't you say what you think and do what you like?"

He made a gesture of weariness. "What use? She loves That. I saw her face." Rose-red from the Tu-tze's embrace, her eyes wild and shining with the rapture that cannot be feigned, he thought he would always see it. Every fibre in him felt raw from the shock; his every belief bristled against it.

He himself had to break the sequent silence, with a thought too stinging to be left unuttered. "It seems like such a reversion!" he cried, passionately.

"Well," said Lambert, meditatively, "I suppose no kind of man can do better than make a woman happy—

or worse than break her heart. And every one of them that marries, marries a foreigner. Thought about that?"

"It may be as well to commence marriage with a little reversion," added the Professor, dryly, glancing up from his prayer-mill. It sometimes dawned on the mind that once—once—the Professor might have been like Lambert.

"And it isn't as if the circuit had never been broken," added the boy—but not quite aloud.

Late, very late that night she came to them, according to her word. A plenty of pine torches had been sent to light their chamber, and by this flickering blaze they saw no promise on her face of tears, of shame, of pleas for forgiveness. It was a strange look, which would have quieted them even had they felt inclined to take the initiative.

"I had difficulty in slipping away," she said, briefly, coldly. "But the Tu-tze is taking his first sleep in two nights. I can go with you now, if you like."

They looked at her.

"You received my message?" she continued, almost austerely, to Traquair. "I am prepared to redeem my word; but we must hurry, if we are to go.

"I will not ask you to forgive me," she continued—and they knew then that what they saw in her face was an unutterable pride. "Fate, not I, has done you an ill turn, Michael—and I, not Fate, am sorry. I have done no wrong in loving the man I had to love, as I will do no wrong in leaving the man I have to leave. But if I leave him," she cried, suddenly, pathetically, abandoning her distant manner and wringing her hands, "I leave all that makes life sweet, alluring, possible.

I thought I would not plead; I thought I would be ashamed; but I am not ashamed. I told you I would give you anything you asked; I am going to ask you to ask—freedom."

The two were quite alone in one end of the great chamber, for Lambert had withdrawn to the other.

"To tell a man—a man who has any idea of being a gentleman—that he holds a woman's fate in his hands," said Traquair, in a low even voice, "is only another way of saying that he lays it in hers, Winifred." He raised his eyes to hers in a half-smile, wistful, almost sweet.

"I am at your service always," he said. "I want no unwilling sacrifice. I have not waited thirteen years for that!" his tone quickening a little. "But for the sake of your own happiness, ask yourself—*will* it be happiness?"

"I do not know," said Winifred, simply. "Who ever knows? I only know that my happiness will perish if I cannot so test it."

"Your book—Victor's, that you were to finish—" He feared making her wince, but need not have done so.

"It is in America," she said, eagerly. "I sent it there by Emma. What did you do with it? I have kept my faith with Victor—in every way."

"But—don't think me ungenerous, but you once told me that complete intellectual sympathy was indispensable in marriage. Think of the wide divergence between you of thought and aim—"

"It does not exist," she interrupted. "I was always a savage, a gipsy, a hater of walls."

"But he would not let you roam from him."

"I would not wish to!" she said, opening her eyes.

"Race and caste count, Winifred."

"Michael," she said, "answer me one question. You have seen him. Is he, or is he not, a man?"

Traquair bent his head. It was plain that nothing was to be done with her.

She stepped close to him. "Listen!" She spoke passionately. "You think I have gone through life only feeling, but I have had some thoughts. I know your civilized world well and deeply; its awful pain that no knowledge compensates for; its progress which crushes God's flower under the rail and man's soul under its conventions; its tenderness for its own sickly nerves which it thinks tenderness for the brother man it cannot see suffer physically, but will hound to every other death or suicide it need not see. Perhaps my own nerves are sickly; for I cannot stand it. Perhaps I judge wrongly and shallowly; but as a woman thinks, so is she."

He bent his head again.

"Another thing," said Winifred, stepping even nearer. "Don't persuade yourself, Michael, that you feel more badly about it than you do."

She gazed at him with a smile half arch, in the gentle, unconscious, and therefore incomparable, brutality of a woman who is wholly done with a man. But she felt in the right, knowing more now of the power of propinquity than in other days. "Your first and only request of me, almost your only word to me, concerned *her*," she reminded. "She will make you a far more fitting wife than I. At least I think she will, if you ask her. I would not ordinarily betray a fellow woman's heart, but—what is told you without words you may tell in words to—the First Gentleman in Europe, Michael."

She suddenly knelt. Before he knew it, the kiss of her lips was on his hand, where, as Candace had justly observed, men care least for it. And in the space of a breath, without other farewell, she was gone down the dark corridor, with light feet hastening to her lord, her own, her first of men in Asia.

* * * * * * *

There was little use trying not to meet again. While the foreigners could not leave Somo too quickly for the desires of themselves and all others, the instantaneous retreat with flying colors which would have been dignified was not practicable, as is the case with so many things which would be dignified. Food, transport, guides—all these must be arranged for. But Candace acted as chief go-between.

The important matter of a choice between China and Tibet of return routes had been decided long ago. Each day's deeper plunge into the drear of the Bodh country had deepened their early-formed resolution to return by way of China, whatever floods, hostile villages or stubborn viceroys might have to say in the matter. News of China's condition was absolutely non-procurable here. London doubtless had it, and Washington, but not this scornful little State on its outskirts. But when the Tu-tze, urged on by Winifred, offered them a guide all the way to Peking, a trusted herdsman who had more than once carried thither the grudged tribute to the Son of Heaven, Traquair accepted the opportunity, as preferable in his eyes to the river route.

The Tu-tze did not pretend to unalloyed altruism in his motives.

"All along the way," he said, with eyes sparkling,

"through Sze-Chuan, through Shensi and Shansi, up to the gates of the Imperial Palace itself, he will drop tales of how a few Man-tze warriors drove many Tibetans back from their borders—saying nothing of how weak from hunger those Tibetans were. The Chinese will hear and fear. It will be exceedingly well."

Ba'ron the wonderful, the munificently rewarded, would not accompany them. The Bodh country was his harvest-field. With a written recommendation such as never guide received before, he would wander back to Leh—perhaps meeting the Kushok again, he said, and extorting from him large reward for not telling the L'hasa officials how he hob-nobbed with foreigners.

"Don't worry about Ba'ron's future," counseled the Professor.

Lin had said, simply, "I follow the big-foot girl;" Lot, at first, equally simply, "I stay with Madame." But it was evident that the sickness for his own Swiss mountains was upon him, and Winifred, with tears, dismissed him.

"It leaves her alone with the—with That," said Traquair, deeply frowning.

"That seems to be her desire," remarked Professor Love.

"But he may marry another woman inside a year. There's not a thing to prevent it."

"But there is a person to prevent it," said the Professor, polishing his glasses. "Man's imperfection is such that he is imperfectly polygamous as well as imperfectly monogamous.—What are you going to do with Candace?"

"She goes with us," said Traquair, self-consciously.

She had made an impassioned refusal to do anything else, when given her choice by Winifred, but made a last ardent unsuccessful attempt to rescue Mrs. Blaize by her own efforts.

"To live where all is so rude!" she wept. "To deliberately turn from your soul's salvation and be unequally yoked to an unbeliever!"

"My dear child, he isn't an unbeliever to me. Buddhism and Theosophy are very much alike."

"Yes, they are both lies. Oh, if you could hear our teachers talk in the mission!"

But Winifred stooped and kissed her. "Candace," she said, "there are many things you cannot understand."

"Still?" asked the startled Candace.

So as soon as could be, the gates of Somo Castle swung open to let them go, with the Peking guide at their head and a motley escort of ragged spearmen bringing up the rear. "I like them better now that they are leaving," said the Tu-tze, heartily. He and Winifred were watching from one of the narrow windows. "Though I marvel that I could ever have been jealous of such. To drop a gun that way! You will not, Heart of me, ever desire a man of your own country again?"

Winifred's eyes had been hanging on him alone, though she stood by the window, from the moment he spoke. "Tu-tze," she said, as softly as if the others could hear her, "you are a man of my own country."

* * * * * * *

They had traveled three or four days through the mountain roads leading into Sze Chuan, whose exquisite

plumed beauty of fern and flower was never wasted on a more silent and self-absorbed little band, before Traquair suddenly woke up from his thoughts and missed something.

"Why don't you sing, Lambert?" he asked.

"Don't feel like it," answered Lambert.

"But it shortens the way.—Will you, Candace?" She was riding at his side.

"I will do anything you ask of me, Mr. Traquair."

She said those things so simply, she was in all points so sweet, so pellucid, so rainbow-fresh a creature in this tear-stained world, that, turning now to look at her, she seemed almost too wonderful to exist; and far, far too wonderful for him. His life had been so full of deprivations and rude face-slaps that he could scarcely believe—though the positive word of one of those omniscient fellow-women, and his own secret shamefaced conviction, both declared for it—that this beautiful perfect fruit hung low enough for his long-empty hand. He had hung back from speaking, remembering how near he had been to doing it on the plateaux of the Bodh country, where his misgivings as to Winifred's happiness with him should alone have taught him the validity of Lambert's wisdom with regard to broken circuits.

But he suddenly felt that he could not wait. Tenderness, humility unspeakable for so unspeakable a gift, swept over him like a wave. Around them were only uncomprehending savages, Lambert and the Professor riding far ahead in the line. "Then will you marry me, Candace?" he asked, swiftly; and she answered, in a low tone, "No, Mr. Traquair."

It was all over in a moment—a moment in which Traquair felt himself unutterably old and heavy, and spiritually shabby and shopworn, and absurd and futile and presumptuous. His pride was too stunned to resent any of these characterizations. To be rejected, within the space of a few days, by two women, both of whom he sincerely loves after the marvelous masculine fashion, is a hard blow for any man.

"Have you any objections to—giving reasons?" he asked, after they had ridden a few yards further in complete silence, in the artificially composed manner under which emotions struggle.

"I am American," answered Candace, curtly.

The pomegranate hue on her cheek burned dazzlingly deep. Her hands, so thin as to seem half transparent, beat a nervous tattoo on the gray furry neck of her little mule, of whose bridle Lin left her no care. Her sensitive upper lip shortened, lengthened, twitched, with the effort to keep it under command. Candace was angry.

"No doubt," she continued, cuttingly, "you thought me all Chinese—so much so that I would be only too honored to be taken by a European gentleman as a wife after he had failed to get the woman he really loved. But you must go where they sell China girls for that. Why did you not think to buy me of Mrs. Blaize? It was a pity. Even in China every girl hopes to be Wife Number One. And in America, which is my father's country, girls do not marry men whom they do not love. Ah," suddenly melting, "do not think me disrespectful, Mr. Traquair! You have been so kind to me. But a girl must—love as she must, Mr. Traquair!"

"Then you must love?" he asked, quickly.

She looked as though caught in a trap. Her hands went swiftly to her face, in a mute plea for forbearance that was infinitely girlish and touching; but it seemed as though the pomegranate still glowed through their transparency—the glory of dawning womanhood, when the rose of love first suffuses the cold clouds of youth.

"Wake up," Lambert said to him, again and again during the marches of the next days. "Who's leading this expedition? the Man-tze chap? Do you know this is a perfectly beautiful country—likewise a perfectly God-forsaken one? Don't seem to care for strangers at all."

Great tall fellow! Traquair suddenly envied him his height, and his rich elasticity of soul and body which we call youth, and his easy mirth, and all that had won the heart of Candace Roberts. Little wonder that she had twice deliberately chosen a perilous journey in his company to safety without it; that, well-nigh frozen and fainting, she had climbed up a hill of glass, like a fairy-tale princess, to find him. And he, Michael, with the conceit of middle-age, had calmly taken all these things to himself.

"I should have remembered that Don Quixote died a bachelor," he thought, grimly, and said, aloud:

"Lambert, what's become of 'Love of Jesus, all divine'?"

"Don't think I'll ever sing again, Mikey."

"Why not? more blues?"

Lambert nodded.

"But you've great cause to be cheerful, boy. Just

think of finding your father alive and well in that lonely mountain eyrie,—a chance in a thousand!"

"Yes, but he didn't fall on my neck. I want people to fall on my neck."

"Lambert," suddenly, "are you in love?"

"Of course. Who isn't?"

A little spark of hope quite died in the Scotchman. "With Candace?" he asked.

The boy stared. "Good Lord, Michael, what are you thinking of? Candace? She's Chinese!"

"Speak of her with more respect, if she were African," returned Traquair, hotly. "As it is, she is quite as much American, and it is a pity if the experiences of the past few months haven't taught you anything of human solidarity behind all races and beneath all complexions." And hers was so beautiful!

"Is Saul also among the prophets?" asked Lambert, grinning. Then, his face and tone changing, "Michael, I couldn't tell you. It was a shabby thing to think, even if you did love a woman—that if anything happened to your best friend while he was trying to save her, she might take up with *you*, if you were on the spot. I couldn't tell you. I had to let you think it was pure love of you, and dad, and adventure, brought me out. Mikey, she nursed me when I was sick—that soft brown hand trailing all over a fellow's face—and she cares for that Tu-tze chap—and I don't feel like singing."

"Do you mean that you love Winifred Blaize?"

"Of course. Who doesn't?"

He would not turn his head, but Michael reached out and wrung his hand. In a few moments each was

talking evenly of other things, as was Candace to the Professor, with whom she now rode more than with any other person. We get used to the wonder of it—that beings who can so passionately hope can so quietly renounce.

But Candace was now become a care. What to do with her, what to propose to her, sorely puzzled her guardian. In China she could teach in a mission—but she had positively refused to re-enter a mission; and in any other country, what could she be, since she would not be his wife?

And then, suddenly, all seven of them (the escort of Man-tze spearmen had been dismissed at the frontier of China proper) ceased to dwell on minor anxieties, under a sudden realization that China was in a very bad way, and that the stranger within her gates was in a worse one.

"Why did they not tell us?" muttered Traquair, jarred out of his lethargy of disappointment by flying mud-missiles, by threatening magistrates who came out on the city walls and energetically advised them to pass on quickly, for they could be responsible for no foreigners' safety, and by the roving bands of wicked-eyed hoodlums, more fear-inspiring than the chukpas of Tibet, who issued forth from the cities, armed sometimes with good guns and always with efficient abuse, and hurled insults until Candace clung to the Professor.

The hovering storm had broken. Even inanimate China was in revolution; broken bridges, swamped grain-fields, adobe dwellings literally melted by fierce rains and burned by fiercer droughts into mere mud-cakes in which even a Chinese family could not dwell—

these alone told their tale of desolation and danger. And they were not alone. On the bark of the trees, on the boulders in the hilly fields, were pasted flaming scarlet placards with a legend Lin translated with trembling voice, "*Mieh yang*," "Kill all foreigners." Rumors reached them that, behind them, English missionaries had been hideously murdered. The track before them, into Shensi and Shansi, was cut by the cart-wheels of fleeing missionaries and merchants, marked by the ashes of their burnt chapels and stations.

"*The Great Sword Society is delivering*," read a proclamation pasted on the gates of a town they sought for shelter. "*China's well-being is quickly to be accomplished. Foreign devils, poisoning wells, plucking out children's eyes for medicines and sorcery, smearing with dirty blood our door-sills, selling in the markets empty skins of beasts which they will later animate into fighting men, are to be swept into the seas. Already all in Peking have been slaughtered. Citizens will be circumspect to assist sacred work. Great Sword Society, with bodies possessed by spirits and impervious to death-blow, is delivering.*"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST.

THEY were in a cart, together with about four times too many other human beings, and drawn by mercilessly slow-moving mules whose frenzied native driver apostrophized them as "Boxers." They were the only ones who spoke English. There were some in the cart who did not even speak Chinese—a quartette of hapless Swedish girls, who huddled together with hands veiling eyes whose last sight had been one too horrible to think of; therefore they could think of nothing else. They were uncompromising Protestants, but the Mother Superior had her arm around the neck of the youngest. She could not verbally comfort them, for they did not understand French either.

Traquair, Lambert and his father, Lot and Lin, composed the only men of the party. There had been the Man-tze guide to Peking. There was no longer. He had run away in fright, into the arms of a band of fierce villagers, who, mistaking him for a Christian, had cut the dead body afterward into a hundred pieces, that he might not rise again in three days, as was the hideous habit of these foreigners.

"They died bravely," a soft-voiced little French nun continued in an undertone to Traquair. "But that it was so terrible to see them burning—their little bodies

writhing"—she stopped for a moment, and turned away her head, her shoulders heaving under the no longer immaculate white cape—"one would scarcely feel sad, for a martyr's death is so glorious, and China is an evil country for girls."

Traquair glanced, with a contraction of the heart, at Candace, who sat close to the Professor—the nearest to Lambert. Poor little Candace—poor little cross-purposing atoms all of us!

"One little boy," Sister Aglaë went on, "whom the murderers dragged away from the hands of the Fathers in Tai-Yuan, cried out, 'I believe, I believe, I believe!' till they struck his head off. Some say even the severed head repeated it."

She wiped her eyes. The Professor bent an ear alertly to catch her last words. He was busily writing in a note-book.

"Cease relating horrors, Sister Aglaë!" called the Mother Superior, peremptorily. "They have occurred, they are over. We are here alive, with a remnant of our dear children, and under the protection of brave American and European gentlemen, who by the providence of God speak our tongue. We are more than half-way to Wei-Han, where the Cathedral is fortified. Why not assume that our troubles are at an end?"

Sister Aglaë smiled tremulously. It was evidently too much for her to assume.

The very lambs of the flock, the little native girls under their charge, jabbered horrors among themselves. "Did you see Yo Wun perish?" asked one, cheerily.—"Yes. I wonder if they have enough crowns all ready in Paradise for so many children—such small ones, for

of course the angels commonly expect children to go to purgatory, they are all so naughty."

"The Legations at Peking have been blown up with gunpowder," said another. "Not a foreigner is left living in China but our teachers—not a Christian but us."

"Children, the Archbishop himself shall punish you, if we reach Wei-Han alive!" called the Mother Superior, still more peremptorily. "Repeat your devotions, if your tongues *must* clack, and in them forget not the foreign gentlemen"—who, poor heretic souls, knew not the uses of prayer.

The Tang—the Cathedral of Wei-Han—was fortunately situated outside the town on its own land. Ironical reaction of cause and effect! that in the day when China rose in anguish against the evangelizing foreigner who usurps her land, the only thing that saved him was his occupation of that land—thus justifying both parties. Gray and battlemented like a fort—as indeed it was—its peaked head against the blue looked ineffably beautiful to the exhausted refugees when they finally reached it, after three weeks of flight across blighted Shansi. Shansi, most venomously hostile of all provinces in China, had grown so furious against the alien that she had turned, as one frothing at the mouth, and rent her own flesh with her own teeth. The red-clad men, with their cries of "Sha, sha!" ("Kill, kill!") could not always take time to examine a man's forehead to see if the cross were outlined there by foreign magic, nor ascertain whether a thriving farmstead really sheltered "secondary devils"—those who had given "aid, comfort or sustenance" to foreign or native Christians.

Kill, kill! So all lay killed, before that orgy of panic-fired hate was over—the blaze on the blood-stained hearthstone, the growing grain under foot, the beast of burden which fleeing foreigners might press into service, the babe at its mother's breast. Kill, kill! there are too many in the world at all times. And with all old grudges, hatreds, rankling wrongs of their personal life rising subtly from secret caverns in their hearts, to mingle maddeningly with the patriotic detestation of the white-face, the devastating "Fists of Righteous Harmony" beat wildly about them. It was the epilepsy of a sick nation.

The white-bearded Monsignor who presided over the Cathedral gathered them joyfully in—the holy sisters and the remnant of their orphanage, the still speechless Swedish girls, the four men and the girl who had joined them in a friendly peasant's hut where they had hid by day, and, last of all, Lin, who spread consternation among the Cathedral's inhabitants by stolidly denying that he was a Christian, or anything but a follower of "the big-foot girl."

The Monsignor had almost as motley a crowd inside—more nuns with more native pupils; a batch of engineers and traders, of assorted nationalities, who had fled from the town and the railway station, when the Boxers had built a bonfire under the latter with the torn-up ties, carrying away the rails to frustrate the ill purposes of the trains, which were as Christian as anything. And there were five Protestant missionaries, from far—who knows how far?—to the southeast, with the living remnant of *their* flock; who, the good bishop explained, had been literally scourged

from town to town until, some Chinese regulars opposing the Boxers, these had fled, abandoning their prisoners. But what possesses the young Eurasian girl? Is it a long-lost relative she has found? For Candace, with a piercing cry, has thrown herself into the arms of an emaciated woman, who totters with the onslaught and the surprise.

"Mrs. Frere!" she sobbed. "Oh, my home!" She wound her arms around Mr. Frere too, while the decorous little China children looked aghast. "Is Dr. Russell here too? and Miss Courtlandt? why, it is like Ngan Kin. Yes, I have grown tall, but I am still Candace!"

She disappeared with them into an inner room in the building where yet more refugees sat, industriously filling cartridges; for, the archbishop told Traquair, the Chinese had attacked the little citadel once, and though repulsed, might at any time come back—"the stiff-necked heathen!" he remarked, as untragically as the Mother Superior herself, for whom Traquair had contracted an intense admiration.

Traquair spent the rest of the day grubbing about the courtyard with a couple of German engineers, looking for any signs near the walls of a mine, the Monsignor's chief dread. "So ingenious are they, the Mephistos!" he observed, before assembling the Catholics for vespers.

Some of the Protestants knelt with them, the great Crucifix on the high altar seeming to them less exclusively the property of one organization than in days when physical persecution—the nails, the bleeding brow, the long darkness, the forsaking God—seemed a

legend. Some, however, stayed outside in the cavern-like vestibule, among these a girl who, when Traquair approached her, said, quickly:

"Do not speak to me."

"What is it, Candace?"

"Do not speak," closing her nails in her hand. "I am all alone. My father and mother are dead."

"My little girl!" He forgot she had rejected him. He forgot she loved Lambert, and only remembered that he loved her. Not as he had loved Winifred, perhaps, for the affection long and slowly trained about one individuality fits but loosely on another, but—better than he now loved Winifred. To "peep and botanize" in matters of the heart, to take account of anything but the overwhelming present, is irremediable folly. Who can determine what love is or should be? how much of the paternal, the maternal, the fraternal, or even the cousinly, enters into the stereotyped relation of the sexes?

"Did the Freres tell you?" he asked.

"Yes. My mother crept to the mission after my father died of the Smoke, and stayed there till she—died of the Smoke too. They buried her with the service. I do not know where my father died. He was tall as the Professor, and once merry as Lambert, and kind—oh, kind as you!"

A man only knows one way to comfort a woman, and, oddly enough, it is the only efficacious way. This was barred here. He stood looking at her sorrowfully.

"Dear child," he finally said, with hesitancy, "do not grieve too much. Had they lived, it might have been only to be murdered by the Boxers."

"I do not grieve," said Candace, stonily. "That is why you must not speak to me. I am very wicked. I am glad, glad! Oh, Mr. Traquair," the tears suddenly beginning to trickle, the final triumph of Occidental over Oriental instincts, "I said I would some day tell you about my feeling for my parents. It was something hard, dry, hurting in my heart—not love any more. These two years I have dreaded meeting them, seeing them grown brown and ape-like, claiming my service—I dreaded it, and they my own parents! I could not forget they sold me. I did not tell the Freres," lowering her voice.

His heart was in that forlorn state when small things thrilled it. He had been secretly jealous of this renewal of old ties, which seemed to definitely settle her future away from him, if future there were ever to be for any of them. "Candace," he said, gently, "do you not forgive them a little, now that they are dead?"

"Yes," she sobbed. "A little. My own parents!"

"When a year has gone by, you will forgive them more and more. You might talk with the Archbishop about it—" throwing himself back, as Protestantism has so often done in exigencies, on the ancient refuge of auricular confession.

"Not with Dr. Love?" she asked, innocently.

"No, scarcely with Dr. Love."

He was near them at the very moment, majestically moving out of the church with the throng of worshipers. A small pencil was in his hand. It did not seem possible that so innocuous an article could evoke such aversion as that with which Traquair viewed it. "What are you doing with that?" he demanded.

The Professor polished his glasses. "My dear Traquair," he replied, "I am taking notes, as would any other sane man in the midst of this religiously hysterical, though undoubtedly courageous, community. The whole scene is deeply instructive. If those yellow fiends kill me, my book on 'The Myth of the Supreme Being' dies with me, of course; but if I escape them, I will have material of transcending psychological value. Of course this—a—business is all very distressing, and no one has less desire to see any one martyred than I; but if anything *does* occur, from which I escape, I may say, without heat, that the opportunities for observation—"

The Monsignor interrupted him, laying a hand on each man's shoulder. In his white beard and priestly robes he looked regal. "All our men were out patroling the walls last night, ready for an attack, for those misguided heathen have sent word they will come and blow us up with gunpowder. They are worthless now, for want of sleep. If you could—"

"By all means," said the Professor, before even Traquair. "Wait till I load my rifle. Have you a small cannon? No? A pity! But we will all watch, eh, Traquair?" who stood almost speechless, under the strain to comprehend this extraordinary man.

Every one in the cathedral-citadel watched, even the tiniest of its lisping orphans. The Boxers had seized Wei-Han itself, and sent defiant messages to the Monsignor that when they were through plundering and rioting they would come and starve, burn, or blow him out. Each day after that they watched the landscape for moving blots of red. How strange the malignant

individuality which a mere color may assume! There were women in that besieged company who never wore red again, never could look upon even a scarlet thread without a shudder. The little children cried out when the setting sun, a contracting ball of crimson, seemed to hang tangled in the trees, and shrieked that it was one of the Red Lantern girls—the band of trained female fanatics, last evidence of China's complete intoxication, who, robed in red like the boy Boxers, fought by their side, and were whispered to possess weird powers of pulling down high houses with threads, and rising in the air with lantern in hand, and walking on the clouds.

Everything was believed that summer, by an erstwhile agnostic populace, in a reaction of horrible faith—that foreign engineers with their sacrilegious railroad-digging had roused the Great Dragon on whose back the world rests; that foreign missionaries had smeared dirty blood on door-sills of houses whose occupants in consequence went fatally mad; that incantations like this rendered bodies of Boxers invulnerable to weapons, their spirits the dwelling-places of gods:

"*If cut with knife, if chopped with axe, there will be no trace. Cannon cannot injure, water cannot drown. If I urgently invite the gods, they will quickly come.*"

And one night the end began, with the rolling of a huge red wave of these invincibles up to the very walls of the Tang, with their curdling cry of "Sha, sha, sha!" and each one of its inhabitants knew himself face to face with death.

It makes one calm, that knowledge. Usually dying seems a remote thing, that is done by the other person, not oneself. But it seemed less remote, with the Boxers

yelling and fusillading outside, and the Archbishop addressing them from the chancel inside:

"Little children, God is very good, but in His goodness he often permits people to die as blessed martyrs, for examples to the rest. The heathen have enough ammunition to take the offensive, we scarcely enough for the defensive. They become more every day, we are but a handful. It devolves on us to be cheerful."

People always are cheerful under such circumstances. Michael Traquair looked about him and saw serene-faced women tearing up the silk and linen dressings of the high altar to make mud-bags, whose filling little chattering children dug up with iron spoons within full sound of the awful murderous roar outside the walls, and merrily carried it in their garments. Men whistled, under fire of louder whistling bullets, while they piled up these bags in the courtyard outside, for use in repairing the wall should the Boxers carry out their threat of mining. Michael's mind harked back to the old arguments between himself and Winifred Blaize, and wished she could witness this contrast of East and West, civilization and barbarism, in the calm, courageous, unselfish men and women inside the Tang, and the yelling horde of murderous demons outside, only human enough to show how foul humanity can be.

"Wait till we have killed all your sentries!" the shriek would go up, accompanied by the patter-song of the bullets. "Wait till your powder is all gone, or till we have blown you up into dust too fine to be put together by magic. All the foreigners in Peking have so perished, and with them the foreign soldiers sent to save them!"

"That is either wholly true," said the Monsignor, who had lived long in China, "or else relief of some sort has been despatched and may reach here. Either fact would account for the extra frenzy of the past few days."

In contrast to their shouts, and the death-rattle of their muskets, a half-dozen dark figures, more or less, nightly emerged in complete silence from the watched citadel and quietly took their sentry-places by the walls. Once one of them paused beside a long sleeping figure, stretched beside many others on the damp stone floor of the main aisle, with head almost on the chancel steps. He glanced about him. His companions had gone on ahead. Suddenly he stooped, and with a finger awkward as wood pushed a bushy lock of hair back from the boy's temple.

Lambert stirred. "Water!" he muttered. It was quarter-rations of that now, that they might not be utterly defenceless against fire.

The Professor hesitated. Then he took from his bosom a little flask meant to hold liquor less precious, put it to the lips of his boy, who drank greedily, then hurried away, as from the scene of a crime. Out in the bullet-range his lips would grow black with heat and excitement, but there would be nothing to moisten them with. It would be a new experience for the Professor.

After he had passed, Lambert Love rose cautiously up on an elbow, scarcely breathing, and stared long into the darkness which had swallowed him. "My dada?" he murmured, in a tone half unbelieving. He rubbed his hand along his lips, that were still wet. "The first time," he murmured again. Back in his baby days, he remembered many a night climbing out of a crib to cry

and call with thirsty throat down stairs which invariably yielded a cross maid-servant—never a father.

"Next time"—he thought drowsily—"maybe he'll say—something." He tried to sit up and realize it longer, but, being himself exhausted by sentry duty, lay down instead and slept till the crack of doom.

Or so it seemed—the wild wrenching sound, as of the earth being hurled against a brazen firmament and then rebounding with the sparks so struck, which woke what few in the Cathedral were sleeping into instant perception of the situation. "Quick, to the water-casks!" cried the Monsignor; and eager childish hands that had been drilled to the work emptied vessel after vessel on the flames which poured through the great breach in the wall. They were successfully quenched. But after the flames came rushing in a fiercer enemy, with yellow faces distorted with the joy of rage, brandishing guns and broad-bladed swords.

"Sha, sha! Mieh yang!" ("Exterminate foreigners!") sounded under the very windows of the Cathedral before it had ceased vibrating to the shock of the explosion. The surprised sentries, who fortunately had been stationed out of its range, had only time to gain the entrance before the courtyard was completely filled with the foe.

For this too the besieged party had been drilled. A man hurried to every window with a gun. A pale Sister stood behind to hand him cartridges. Into the Monsignor's room they crowded the children, under the protection of Lambert Love and Traquair, and under the guard of the nuns. They did not whimper—were they not Chinese?—but their deadly quiet as they sat

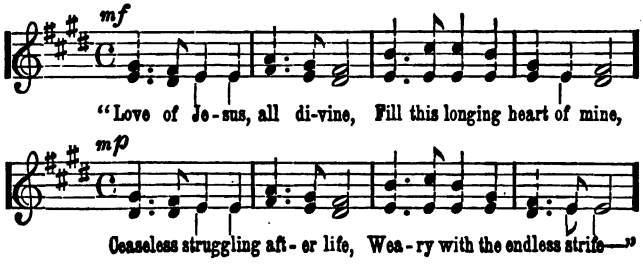
with locked rigid hands listening to the battering with fist and fire at the main entrance was too much for one of the Sisters, who to her own shame burst into tears.

"This will never do," said Lambert, in Chinese. "Here, children, let's make a noise. Frighten the Boxers. Do this after me."

He put his fingers in his mouth and shrilly whistled. It was an American noise, new to them, but the imitative little creatures took it up and sent the weird piercing sound out of the unglassed windows, to momentarily silence the Boxers. It seemed to them an incantation of some sort, and the bullets stopped a minute, only to recommence.

"Oh, if they could but sing!" said the Mother Superior. "Sister Josèphe, who used to lead them, now sings with the blessed army of martyrs. Lead them, monsieur, you who have the angel-voice, and they can follow the air, if not the words. Quick!" as she thought she heard the main door breaking. "I should like them to die singing."

Again there came a pause in the pandemonium outside, as strange words, set to music as alien in its sound-combinations as the words it conveyed, reached the ears of the besiegers:

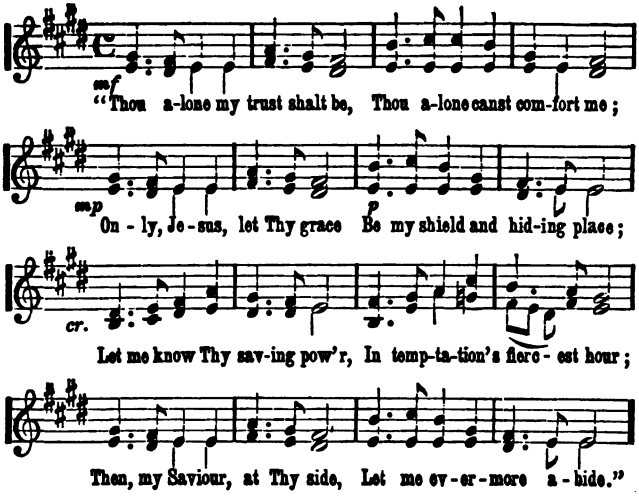


in the strong rolling voice of a man, mingling with the shrill timid treble of the little girls, who dodged the incomprehensible English words. It was but the pause of a moment; but in it another sound—very far, very faint, as shrill, but as familiar to British ears as the hymn was unfamiliar to Chinese, thrilled the air, and the singer himself stopped.

"What is it?" cried Candace, clutching Traquair's arm.

"It's Highland pipers, that's what it is," said Traquair, hoarsely. He pressed her to his heart before Mother Superior and all—most of all, before herself. "It's Allied Troops somewhere. If it were only daybreak, that we could see how near! But they can come and find us all killed, if they're slow enough, and the others quick enough. Start 'em singing again, Lambert; it rattles the yellow faces."

There were noises outside the slenderly barred door. Traquair was needed at the window with his gun. Lambert placed his back against the panels, his uncut yellow hair looking like a "saint-light," as the little ones whispered, against the dark wood. Rifle in hand, —"Continue, children," he said, calmly; and the now desperate Boxers, attacked in the rear by a well-armed force of foreign devils, whose bayonets pricked them on against the very doors of the resistant Tang, heard—as the detachment of Allied Troops said afterward they too heard—more words rise magnificently defiant over the uproar:



The boy's eyes were dilated. More and more volume, summoned from the emotional depths of the inexhaustible heart of youth, rolled into his voice:

> "Thou hast wrought this fond desire,
> Kindled here this sacred fire,
> Weaned my heart from all below,
> Thee, and Thee alone, to know.
> Thou, Who hast inspired the cry,
> Thou alone canst satisfy—"

He fell suddenly backward with the door. Only himself had known this was coming. Of the struggling mass of human beings who filled the passageway, and in their strife had torn the door down, but a portion were Boxers—a determined few who had forced a small side entrance by wounding its guardian—and the foreigners had succeeded already in disarming all but one. One

murderer only inside the little citadel, whose walls the rescue party were even now overleaping; one deadly shot alone fired among so many futile ones—but with its flash and whirr a tall yellow head went down, and Michael Traquair, with the terrible sob of a man, dashed the room's length, to see it already in the lap of Candace, already the death-look on the face.

"I have slain him, and I have slain your Archbishop on his very altar! *He* shall not rise in three days!" shrieked the Chinese in hoarse delight, just before war's retribution reached him.

A cry rose from one of the children. Lambert tried to raise his head.

"Mustn't cry," he said, thickly. "Start 'em singing—rattles the yellow devils. 'Love of Jesus, all divine'—where's the tune gone? Am I going myself?"

"No, no," groaned Traquair.

But Candace said, "Yes."

"Why, that's a lot better," with more animation, half raising himself. "Never was like other people, you know. Awfully weary with the endless strife—" he tried to hum it. "You sing it, Candace."

The girl's quivering voice softly finished out the verse, while the awed little children crept nearer to hear:

> "Saviour, Jesus, lend thine aid;
> Lift Thou up my fainting head;
> Lead me to my long-sought rest,
> Pillowed—on Thy—loving—breast—"

"Oh, I can't!" she sobbed, burying her face in her hands.

"Find his father if you can," said Traquair to some one who stood near.

Lambert's eyes closed and opened. "You'll explain to father, and ask him not to be angry?" he asked, huskily. "About its meaning so much to me, and all—so much I couldn't give it up? You'll be *sure* to explain to him?"

He did not hear their answer.

* * * * * * *

"Is any one alive?" asked the breathless British officer who was the first to gain the threshold.

"All but two," answered all the English-speaking voices—"the Archbishop and a young American."

"But the Archbishop is alive!" contradicted some one. "The Boxers cried out that they saw his face at the window after one of their number had killed him, and that was what first set them in panic and retreat."

"He speaks truly," said a cheery voice. "If I am dead or even was attacked, the fact was most unwarrantably kept from me. Welcome, messieurs! Tell us the news of Peking. You see what is the news of ourselves."

"If anything," emphatically said Traquair to a subordinate British officer who stood near him while the news of Peking was being told, "if anything could once for all silence the sentimentalists who pretend it is a toss-up between civilization itself and the Oriental substitute for it, and that the steady spirit of advance has not been kept up ever since Europe escaped from those picturesque, pestilential Dark Ages, it is the incidents of the past few months. Think of that ravening multitude here, and about the Legations—not a calm

pulse, not a sound brain-cell, not a heart-beat of pity among them."

The man did not answer.

"Do you doubt it?" asked Michael, quickly.

"Don't ask me," said the other. "Shall you leave the country by way of Peking?"

"I must. Why?"

"On your road," said the man, bitterly, "you will find every trace of pillage and rapine, of murder and outlawry, of wallowing in wickedness of every sort, that the hellish mind of man can conceive or carry out. And they won't be Chinese traces. The Russians have choked the Amur with women's and children's corpses. —I don't want to talk about it. I am ashamed of being a soldier of the Allied Troops."

"Surely the British—" began Traquair, with a shudder.

"Were not so bad as the others. That's all. It's not enough to convert the Chinese villagers, who hide at the sight of the foreigner, to your point of view."

Traquair did not speak again until the superior officer, who was making out a report, came by with pencil and pad. "Who is this girl?" he asked, abruptly. "What is her nationality?"

"I have none," said Candace, quietly.

"Where are her kin?"

"I have none," she said, with bent head.

The officer turned to Traquair. "Is she anything to you?" he inquired.

"She is everything in the world to me."

"I don't know just how to put that down," said the officer, with lips twitching a little, and passing on.

Traquair's did not twitch. The dead yellow head of his dearest friend was before his eyes, had lain but an hour since in Candace's lap. Yet in that very moment's solemnity Traquair had been assured of what he had gradually been suspecting for some time—for revelations are seldom so sudden or dramatic as we like to think them—that it was not Lambert whom Candace loved.

"Candace," he said, "*his* heart broke because he was alone in the world—because those who should love him did not."

"Yes," said Candace.

"It would seem sad for our hearts to break for the same cause, would it not, Candace?"

"Yes," she owned.

"And—and unnecessary, Candace?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"That was a horrible way I asked you the first time, wasn't it?" he murmured, after a while.

"I should think it was," said Candace, severely.

"Never mind, I'll never ask a girl in that manner again. And the way you refused me was more horrible still. It was—"

"It was such a surprise!" finished the girl, so keenly that he blushed. "You showed it. You never said you loved me. How did I know? The last I heard of you, you loved Mrs. Blaize. I thought you wanted to marry me because—oh, because I was the next woman who came along. I never felt so alone, so without a home, a nationality, as when you asked me that."

Traquair took from his finger a ring—a big mannish thing with a seal, but he wanted to seal her his.

"With this ring I plight thee my troth," he said, very deliberately, "and with all my nationality I thee endow.—Candace, dear, I haven't any other worldly assets at present—I'm hundreds of dollars deep in debt"—his soul fiercely throbbed for a moment in a last resentment against the Tu-tze—"but you'll take me, won't you?"

A nun, blushing the first pink seen in that place for many a dreary day, touched his arm in timid interruption:

"Pardon, monsieur, but are you not a friend of the large man—the Professor?"

The Professor! It was characteristic of his remoteness from ordinary human life that, even in the sacred idiocy of newly revealed love, Traquair should have forgotten him—and his message to him. "Good God!" he groaned. "No one has told him of Lambert. I was to do it—to explain to him—"

"You cannot do it," broke in Sister Aglaë. "Monsieur, he is dead.

"We just found his body at the foot of the high altar," she went on, "half covered with the hangings, which the Boxer pulled down on him after killing him. He was mistaken for the Archbishop. Weep not, my child! He died a holy martyr to—"

"To the Myth of the Supreme Being," said Traquair, in a shaken voice.

Candace would not let him go alone to look at the body. It had never appeared more majestic. A smile, to Traquair's startled eyes faintly ironical, to the awed women heavenly, parted the big calm lips.

"He knows now," muttered the Scotchman. "I hope

he knows. I hope Lambert himself has explained by now."

"Knows what?" asked Candace. "The dead understand all, do they not?"

Her lover held her tightly to him. "They find, dearest, we trust—what the living find, what you and I have found, for instance, in the year that has passed—that beyond the mountains there are yet people."

THE END.

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